TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH

TIMOTHY PRESCOTT FROST

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Tragedy and Triumph

or

Tares and the Kingdom

A Study in the Sayings of Jesus

By
TIMOTHY PRESCOTT FROST

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TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF MY WIFE
WHO BELIEVED THE WORDS OF JESUS
AND TRUSTED HIM
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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TESTIMONY

CHAPTER I

WORDS

Learned and devout men and women, and other kinds of men and women, have told what they think of Jesus. All sorts of words about Jesus, printed in numberless books, challenge every phase of discipleship. Conflicting words spoken about him murmur through the air in voices of the night.

Ill would it become one who is on the point of adding to these deliverances to disparage the words already written and spoken. Many of them bring light to the mind and comfort to the heart. But we have a more sure word of testimony. We may turn from the Babel of opinion concerning Jesus to his own words, and listen while he speaks for himself. One saying of Jesus may better witness for the truth than a thousand sayings about him. Important as it is to know the convictions of such inspired witnesses as Paul and Peter concerning their Lord, more important is what that Lord said of himself, his world, and his God.

Jesus was not wont to resort to argument to

convince men of the truth and potency of his utterances. Yet, like a commander-in-chief issuing orders, like a judge rendering decisions and imposing penalties, he made no secret of his own estimate of the authority and efficacy of his declarations. Not in the language of boasting, but in solemn appeal, he voiced his assurance of the imperishable worth of his words. Whatever we may think of them, or however we may deal with them, he has made clear what he thought of them.

No wonder his hearers were astonished at his teaching. Not only did he speak as one having authority but as the one having supreme authority, as a teacher having no peer in this world and no superior in any world. While he was careful to make it clear in dealing with the law and the prophets that he came not to destroy them but to fulfill them, he made it equally clear that a greater than Moses was speaking. He interpreted the law, pierced through the letter to the spirit, and carried the application of divine law in human affairs up from the lowlands of retribution to the heights of sacrifice. When over against the law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," he declared "I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil, but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other

also," high above Sinai towered the Mount of Beatitudes. He recognized no right of appeal from his words to any higher tribunal of earth or heaven. Above them he knew no law. In them the law, from which not one jot or one tittle shall pass away till all things be accomplished, became transfigured and glorified.

In the Sermon on the Mount he set before the multitude a narrow gate and a straitened way. Demands and issues were stated in such terms that every hearer must travel one of two roads. After he had spoken there was no middle road of innocuous neutrality. The teaching would determine the fate of every person to whom it came. Nobody could hear it and escape consequences of weal or woe. Jesus solemnly declared that conformity or nonconformity of life to the demands which he had made would settle the outcome of life in the case of every person who heard the demands. As firmly as the writer of the one hundred nineteenth psalm believed in the infallibility of Jehovah's words did Jesus believe in the infallibility of his own utterances.

Nor did he stop there. Not only was he confident of their infallibility as statements of truth but he was equally sure of their efficacy to produce a new and ever-expanding life. The way to the life is narrowed by certain

restrictions on the right and on the left, but there are no shackles on the life itself. It rejoices in the freedom of the sons of God. To a group of believers on one occasion he said of the way to this freedom: "If ye abide in my word, *then* are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Evidently, there were listening bystanders who were neither disciples nor believers, for they began to talk about their father Abraham, and of some kind of freedom from bondage which they thought they enjoyed by virtue of being in the line of that patriarch's seed. Jesus then proceeded to speak of their bondage to sin and of the true liberty as deliverance from sin and its consequences, until he reached the climax of assertion in the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my word, he shall never see death." What was his idea of the nature of his word as having power to make a man proof against death? How could he have such confidence in the efficacy of his words as to say of them, "The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life"? He told the secret again and again. To his enemies he said, "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I heard from God." To his own he said, "The word

which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me." To his Father he said, "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them." He knew that his word was death-proof, because he knew that it was the word of God.

All this means that he expected immediate results from his words, and spoke them with unwavering confidence that his expectations would be realized to the letter. And they were. There was no nicely calculated caution in pronouncing imperatives or making predictions; no resort to mystic vagueness, that he might save his face in case of failure. He spoke as one who knew that he held resistless forces in his grasp, and that mighty works would be done in response to his words. And so it was. On account of the mental dullness of his hearers, and their lack of spiritual insight, he found it necessary to explain many of his sayings, but never was he embarrassed by the impotence of a word. There were times when he laid a gentle hand upon a leprous body, that the thrill of his touch might cheer the leper's heart in the loneliness of his loathsome uncleanness, yet in the healing of all manner of diseases a word from his lips was ever as efficacious as the touch of his hand. For the deliverance of sufferers he issued

orders to the evil powers of the unseen world, certain that his commands would be obeyed. And they were. Not in venturesome prediction of some future marvel, but in the assurance that he was stating a reality for immediate verification he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." That was not the language either of boasting or of delusion, for, according to the record, his voice did speak to the dead and they did hear and live.

What does he think of the course that his sayings are to run in the future? Are they to be living words for a generation, a century, or a millennium, and become moribund phrases in some coming age? Among those familiar with his recorded utterances hardly can there be any halting between two opinions upon that point. Here was One possessed by the conviction that he spoke for all time in words that no one ever can reject or disregard with impunity. Unquestionably, he expected those words spoken in Judæa and Galilee to continue to bring things to pass, far and wide, unto the end of the world, whenever that event may take place or whatever its nature may be. As he looked forward his reiterated conviction in regard to the fulfillment of his

words is well expressed in the declaration of Jehovah, according to the prophet Isaiah, "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." In his recorded sayings there is no intimation that the idea of his words being supplanted or devitalized by later discovered truth, or subsequently developed truth, ever entered his mind. Although he comforted his disciples with the assurance that the Spirit of truth would guide them into truth, unspoken by him because they could not yet bear it, there was no intimation that the supplementary revelation in the least degree would discredit, supersede, or detract from the authority and potency of a single word which he had spoken. Day after day, upon the mountain side and by the sea, he uttered fateful words, confident that those words would not have lost their power when the sea and mountains of Galilee should be no more. For he said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Never did he retract or revise a saying. Never did he apologize for the substance or form of an utterance. Without hedging, even when he knew that his assertions would cost him his life, he spoke straight on in words covering a vast sweep of thinking and being, ranging all the way from the flower of the field to the throne of the Highest. He dealt with things present and things to come, the heights of heaven and the depths of hell, God, angels, devils, as one who knew that he knew all about them, and had so adequate knowledge of present conditions and future outcomes in this world and the world to come that he could speak the final word concerning human life and destiny. So sure was he that his sayings once spoken would win their way against all odds that he seems never to have taken the trouble to write even a single sentence on a scrap of parchment. He simply broadcast his words and sent them forth to go whispering, singing, thundering through the centuries.

CHAPTER II

TRUTH IN TRANSIT

It is written of the Teacher that on a certain occasion he spoke unto the multitudes in parables, and that without a parable spake he nothing unto them. On other occasions, sometimes with scribes and Pharisees more prominently in evidence, and at other times when speaking exclusively to the twelve disciples, he drove his ideas home with scant use of anything parabolic.

Truths are like souls. In order to live on and accomplish their mission in this world, where matter is omnipresent and seems to be mighty, they must have bodies. It would be a sad mistake to insist that every truth must be unclothed. Far better is it that, like human spirits in an environment of economic forces and theories, they should be clothed upon. Hence parables. Every heaven-born parable has a soul that needs a body to make it visible and tangible, and help it to function in the realms of sense. The truth thus embodied is far removed from the nature of a mathematical axiom that can abide through the centuries

like a block of granite, a hard and naked fact. Many a truth, like Wordsworth's "Soul that rises with us, our life's star," comes from afar. "Not in utter nakedness, but trailing clouds of glory," does it "come from God." Thus it is with such parables as the story of the prodigal and the good Samaritan. Doubtless, apart from the parable the truth would not die, but how much richer and mightier its life thus made incarnate!

Like teachers of the present day, and sages in every age, Jesus made use of stories to illustrate, explain, and enforce important truth. Albeit he told immeasurably better stories than some that are told in present processes of reputedly religious education. It is noticeable that he never put forth riddles. Hard questions he did put to enemies who sought to ensnare him in his talk, but he was no Samson to discomfit his foes with a puzzle extracted from such a malodorous region as the carcass of a beast. Modern Philistines do not always understand him. How could they be expected to understand all the sayings of One who speaks not as their scribes? The language of his homeland is a foreign tongue to them. Yet, though his thought made excursions into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, it was not in the purpose of his teaching to keep

the world guessing or to sharpen wits by the discipline of a pleasing mental exercise. Neither was he an Æsop to put wise remarks in the mouth of the wolf, nor a Jotham to assemble all the trees of orchard and forest in conclave to choose a king. No fable is to be found among his sayings, nor does he anywhere introduce fabulous characters. He speaks of Satan as being at the head of a kingdom, but never of such a thing as a bramble issuing decrees in regal state. In his teaching departed spirits talk, but beasts pronounce no words and plants ever hold their peace. Never does the non-existent or the unreal masquerade as a reality. It is difficult to conceive how he could have made it more evident than it is in his teaching that when he speaks of beings as real and intelligent he believes that such beings do exist and that they are what he represents them to be.

Nevertheless, even when the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us for a season, "full of grace and truth," how is truth to make the transit from the mind of the Infinite to the mind of the finite? Notwithstanding all the explorations of the psychologists the path is yet somewhat obscured. So long as one is a child he thinks as a child, and when he thinks he has put away childish things, all barriers to

correct reception of truth are not removed. Even then he knows only in part. Whatever may be said, either justly or unjustly, of the superiority of the trained mind, it must be admitted that, upon the whole, Jesus found many of the diligently trained minds of his age to be less hospitable to truth than many of the less trained or even untrained minds. That fact, in his judgment, was not altogether to be deplored, for he thanked God for it, saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." Although the things declared just before this expression of thanks, and here mentioned as hidden, were of exceedingly solemn and fateful import, precisely how or why the Father hid them from wise and scholarly persons Jesus did not say; or if he did, the information is lost to us in the vast volume of his unrecorded sayings. It may be well to note that these words were spoken in prayer, and since the Father must have been fully aware of his own reasons for such concealment, it was unnecessary for the Son to mention those reasons in his outburst of thanksgiving for the fact. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that there was no necessity for the Son to inform us of the reasons. They may

be some of the secret things which belong unto God. The important thing for babes to know, and possibly no less important for the wise and understanding to know, is that some precious truth may gain readier access to the untrained than to the trained mind.

Most mental training is so conditioned by its objectives as to develop a bias of some kind, and thus different courses of training issue in differences of mental habit. Not all these habits are wholly profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. It comes to pass in some cases that the mind in training becomes inoculated with presuppositions which render it immune, in greater or less degree, to certain phases of truth. One person is trained in law, another in medicine. Submit to the two a fact or theory outside the special domain of either, and the studied opinion of the one is likely to differ somewhat from the diagnosis of the other, both in method and conclusion. It makes a marked difference both in process and in result whether a mind is trained to look into the realm of enactments and precedents or into the region of symptoms. Nowhere, perhaps, is there to be found a larger group of minds more exactingly trained than in the

faculty of a university. Turn a theological doctrine loose in that company and the variance in mental attitude, process, and judgment of those "wise and understanding" men in dealing with the doctrine will become apparent even to undergraduate babes. A heavenly truth may have a better chance for its life among receptive hearts undisciplined in the lore of earthly schools than with other persons adequately trained for many worthy purposes. Pity the truth that comes down from heaven to run the gantlet of earthly specialists. Though it escape with its life, it must suffer wounds and afflictions.

Besides, not all barriers to the transit of truth are in the realm of the intellectual. Many utterances of Jesus bear strong testimony to his conviction that wayward desires of the heart lead persons to put forth excuses for declining to accept truth repugnant to their previously constructed and personally conducted ideas, and for neglecting or refusing to bring the life into harmony with its requirements. In this connection it is pertinent to note that he once rebuked a group of outstanding religious leaders in these words: "Ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying,

This people honoreth me with their lips;
But their heart is far from me.
But in vain do they worship me,
Teaching *as their* doctrines the precepts of men."

We should miss the point were we to regard this rebuke as a warrant for indiscriminate denunciation of tradition as something inherently and necessarily mischievous. A tradition is a doctrine or belief handed down from generation to generation. Nor is it always the worse for that. In fact, most of our really valuable ideas have been handed down to us in one way or another over longer or shorter periods of time. Age does not make a belief erroneous, nor does the freshness so attractive to those who, like the Athenians of old, spend much time either in telling or hearing some new thing, make a belief true. All sorts of doctrines, good and bad, true and false, are handed down. Handing a good teaching down does not falsify it, and should not wear it out if proper care is exercised in the manner of handing it down. Really, it is nothing against a doctrine that it has been handed down a long distance, and in that sense has become tradition. Indeed, the persistence of a belief has been judged by many reputable thinkers to create a presumption

that at heart it is eternal verity. The world-wide and age-long witness of the human spirit to a goodly doctrine is not without significance as an index to truth. Moreover, in the quest of truth in a scientific age it is profitable to keep in view the fact that not every kind of truth is best discovered by scientific research, even if it can be discovered at all in that way. Possibly some vigorous searchers after truth might faster increase their store if they would humble themselves, be quiet, and let the Truth search them.

It is manifest that there are various ways of making void the word of God. Hypocritical use of a man-made tradition makes the word of none effect. Sincere adherence to an insufficient tradition may foster delusion. Taking for guidance the letter which killeth to the neglect of the spirit which giveth life may deprive the word of its life-giving power. The temptation to weaken or parry the force of a strong statement of unwelcome truth in the sayings of Jesus by treating it as overstatement or misstatement may be too enticing for some interpreters to resist. Those religious teachers so scathingly rebuked by the Master made void the truth of an old tradition handed down from Sinai by introducing the pernicious error of a newer tradition. The doctrine of that

Pharisaic tradition was demoralizing. Jesus opposed to it an ennobling teaching, older by centuries. As the commandment of God was made void by ideas and interpretations put forth many ages after the commandment was given, so it is possible for the words of Jesus to be made void by recently developed interpretations and newly born doctrines. In that way worship may be made vain by substituting the precepts of men for the commandments of God.

Jesus was ever bringing the word of God out of the skies into earthly scenes and clothing it in such forms that it might accomplish the purpose of the Father in his world. In all his use of imagery he was doing his best to disclose the truth to all who really desired to know and live the truth. He did not expect the meaning of all his parables to be comprehended by everybody, but of some hearers he could say, "Seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." Sometimes the best he could do for his most responsive hearers was to throw a few rays of light upon mysteries which can be perfectly understood by no person in the mortal life. Even some of the words spoken to his disciples of the inner circle out of the depths of his yearning heart on the night before the

crucifixion were characterized by him as "dark sayings." Just at that time his most intimate friends were able to discern those gracious realities of the unseen realm only as shadowy forms in the gloaming.

The Galilæan Teacher used figures of speech to make visible to the inward eye truth from the unseen world of spirit and the far-reaching world of destiny. He drew word pictures to explain this truth by likenesses. We could not regard him as an honest and reliable teacher were those likenesses to misrepresent the essential characteristics of the originals by putting darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. For example, it is beyond question that, in drawing pictures of human character and destiny, a teacher possessed of a true conviction that he was sent from God and was speaking truth received from God would not picture a tragic doom as the fate of souls really destined to enjoy a blessed immortality, or depict a future of heavenly bliss for souls bound for perdition.

While through most of his teaching there is no serious difficulty in determining whether truth is appearing in the realm of the figurative or is following the path of direct statement, there are places where the line of

demarcation between the figurative and the literal may not be immediately obvious. When he spoke of Herod as a fox, probably no one supposed that he intended to be understood as meaning that the king actually had four paws fully equipped with claws and was a nocturnal marauder of hen roosts. That reference to Herod was clearly in the realm of hyperbole, yet fully justified by the ruler's foxlike cunning and cruelty. But the statement of the Lord that "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" seems to have been a puzzler to his disciples. The difficulty of getting a rich man into the Kingdom appeared to be considerably exaggerated. Indeed, the implications of his statement, as the disciples saw them at the first glance, were sufficient to shut most persons out. Nevertheless, the exaggeration was more apparent than real. The trouble with the young man whose case suggested the strange comparison between the rich man and a camel was that his riches had captured the citadel of his soul. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. In the life of the young ruler there was an intermingling of heart and earthly treasure, and there is no place in the heavenly kingdom for that kind of conglomeration. The king-

dom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit. According to the Master's teaching, no person rich in spirit, in the sense that riches hold possession of the spirit, can enter there.

Even though there may be places in the teaching of Jesus where we are not able with certainty to separate the literal from the figurative, we need not miss any truth essential to the welfare of the spirit. There is a narrow zone of uncertainty between the shades of night and the glimmer of day. They who watch for the morning cannot detect the moment when night ends and day begins. But soon they know that the light of dawn has arrived, and through long hours they are certain that it is day. No one with eyesight can mistake noon for midnight. So in seeking truth as it is set forth in the words of Jesus, while we may not always be able to determine the precise point where symbolism ends and literalism begins, most of the time we know whether we are in the realm of the symbolical or the realm of the literal. In speaking of the great matters of conduct and destiny he makes it clear whether he means good or evil, light or darkness, joy or sorrow. In those utterances there is no danger that honest seekers of the truth will be unable to distinguish the light of heaven from the darkness of perdition.

CHAPTER III

WITNESSES

It was late in the evening of that gladdest day in human history. The disciples of Jesus were gathered in a room somewhere in Jerusalem. Two of their number had just returned from a visit to the little village of Emmaus and were telling how their risen Lord had walked with them on the way, when suddenly Jesus himself stood in the midst of the company and greeted them with the salutation, "Peace be unto you." The first effect of his presence was not peace but fright. He quieted their fears, reminded them of words which he had previously spoken to them, and said, "Ye are witnesses of these things." Some time later the same band stood with him on Olivet, when again he declared to them, "Ye shall be my witnesses." On another occasion he bade them go forth to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded.

That injunction to teach his commands makes it plain that he required them to be witnesses, not only to the works which they had seen him do, the death which they had

seen him die, and the risen Lord whom they beheld, but also to the words which they had heard him speak. They did not fail to obey that injunction. When two of that band stood as prisoners before rulers breathing threatening, if not slaughter, against the disciples of the Lord, and were forbidden to teach in the name of Jesus, the answer of the prisoners was, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard." It should not be overlooked that in this answer they revealed their conviction that to them the voice of Jesus was to be obeyed as the voice of God. As messengers of Christ and God to the people of their time, and reporters of Christ's words to the people of all time, they were to speak the message which he had spoken to them, regardless of consequences.

Since there were no stenographers in those days to take down the words from the Master's lips, the disciples must have listened to his sayings and held them in memory, for how long a time we do not know. Eventually they either committed them to writing or repeated them to others who wrote them. In what language they first were written we may not be certain. Through processes of tran-

scription and translation they have come down the centuries to us.

In all that we know of the disciples of Jesus they stand forth as men honest in purpose, devoted to the right as they saw the right, having what the Master characterized as the "single eye," incapable of deception or conscious evasion in statement, determined to tell the whole truth as they perceived it, however their testimony might affect their personal interests. As listeners and learners these men were the constant companions of their Teacher for a considerable period. Such persons, having such opportunities for hearing and observing, may be accepted as trustworthy witnesses. Evidence that they are trustworthy witnesses is seen in their faithfulness in reporting their own faults and failures and their Master's rebukes. Instances will occur to anyone familiar with the gospel narratives.

They tell the story of their failure to heal an epileptic boy, and of the Master's lament, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you?" Again, we find them telling the story of engaging in a verbal squabble over the question of precedence in the kingdom of heaven, and their Lord's declaration that except they turn and become as little children they shall in no wise enter the

Kingdom; and again, the story of one of their number taking his Lord to one side and trying to set him right in his views of Messiahship, and of the Lord's scathing rebuke of the performance. When men thus publish to the world the story of their own humiliation, evidently it is their endeavor to report the words of their Lord as they were spoken.

And yet, admitting their good intentions, we may question their accuracy. Integrity may exist in connection with fallibility. Paul admitted that although his preaching was the light of the knowledge and glory of God shining out of his heart, he had that treasure in an "earthen vessel." That was the Pauline way of owning up to human limitations. Every other New Testament reporter and writer was an earthen vessel. The precious treasure contained in the words of Jesus has been conveyed to us by means of earthen vessels. While the treasure itself is none the less precious for that, we do well to exercise care lest we fail to estimate correctly the limitations of the earthly transmitters.

Sometimes because of this earthen quality the disciples sadly misunderstood the teaching of Christ. When he warned them to beware of the leaven of Pharisees and Sadducees they thought he was talking about loaves of bread.

Had it not been for failure to understand his teaching concerning peace and the sword, Peter would not have made the mistake of carving an ear from a servant of the high priest. Yet more strange than their misunderstanding of figurative allusions to leaven and the sword was the failure of the twelve to grasp the meaning of his repeated declaration that he was to be put to death by his enemies, and that on the third day thereafter he would rise from the dead. According to their own testimony, so utterly unable were they to comprehend and accept his prediction of his resurrection that when those loyal women who followed him to death and the sepulcher came from their visit to the tomb at early dawn of the third day, bringing the tidings that the Lord was risen, those disciples refused to believe it, regarding the whole story as idle talk.

Years afterward an apostle could write, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," but in those earlier days with the Teacher the disciples seem to have fallen short of such vision. When they tried to follow their Lord in his excursions into the movements and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven it appears that sometimes they lost the trail. Their

view of the onward sweep of Christ's work in this world and the world to come was lacking in perspective. Their conception of futures was bounded by narrow horizons. They could not correctly judge distances in the development of God's plans. As the stars of heaven were seen by them, not uncounted millions of miles away, but just a measurable distance above the flight of birds, so the unfolding events of future ages were viewed as near by and soon to come to pass.

Taking that into account may help us in reading their record of the statements of Jesus concerning coming events. Such a record, for instance, as we have in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, giving his discourse on the destruction of Jerusalem, his own coming in glory, and the end of the world; a discourse very perplexing to many devout believers. The setting of the discourse is made clear in the Gospels. The time was Tuesday of passion week at eventide. Before Jesus, less than three days distant, loomed the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary. Behind him was a day of strategic verbal conflict with his foes, one of the most strenuous days of his incarnate ministry. His authority was challenged, and he met the challenge with a question which

the challengers dared not answer. Then he scourged them with three parables of warning, the first to show them that publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before them, the second picturing the miserable destruction of wicked husbandmen as a type of the fate awaiting them, the third likening them to murderers. Thereupon the Pharisees and Sadducees renewed their attack by plying him with hard questions. He answered the questions in a way to silence the questioners. That was followed by a series of terrific woes, ending in the lament of a breaking heart over the impending doom of the people of Jerusalem. As he was departing from the Temple the disciples called his attention to the massiveness of the architecture, and he responded with the dire prediction, "The days will come, in which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

They departed from the city and proceeded to Olivet. According to Matthew, "the disciples came unto him privately." Mark tells us that "Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately." Either the four or the twelve with their Lord appear to have seated themselves upon the slope of the mount over against the Temple, apart from listeners, for rest and private conversation. The dis-

ciples put to him a threefold question. First, "Tell us when shall these things be?"—evidently referring to the demolition of the Temple. Second, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" Third, "And of the end of the world?" All the events involved in this threefold query seem to have been viewed in their thought as constituting a single group in the time of their occurrence.

As we look backward through the centuries it is apparent that in divine procedure some of the events are separated from others by age-long periods of time.

In imagination one may join that group on Olivet, listen to the voice of the Master and note the look of wonder and awe with which his words are received by his hearers. His eyes are toward the city dimly discerned in the gloaming, but his vision embraces other things visualized in clearer outline far away. Although his spirit is yet overshadowed by the experiences of the day, coming events hold him in their thrall. His thought sweeps on through the ages. He beholds the onward march and the mighty conflict of spiritual forces unto their tragic culmination, when the world story shall become a closed chapter in the history of the realms of God. He speaks. As he proceeds he is soon beyond

the depth of fishermen and tax-gatherers. Their three questions are answered insofar as answers can be made to questions upon matters with implications reaching on to dates unknown. Part of the time he is answering questions, part of the time speaking of mysteries transcending all the questions of the hour, and part of the time just thinking out loud in such thoughts as only the Christ of God can think. He speaks to this little group on Olivet as if all nations were listening. He speaks to that age and to future ages as if his voice were to be heard until the end of the world. His utterance is at once a prophecy, a sermon, a soliloquy, an epic. His mood is so exalted that he cannot hold himself within the bounds of human comprehension or imagination. He lets himself go among the eternities. As he mounts and soars one detects the far-away play of lightnings and hears the distant rumble of thunders in a cataclysm involving the last sad tragedy of the world's history and the final triumph of Christ. The story is so vast in its sweep, it ascends so high into the heaven of bliss and descends so low into the hell of woe, as to transcend or submerge human thought. No mortal ever did fathom its full meaning, and there appears no prospect that any mortal ever will.

If the foregoing in some degree correctly characterizes the mood and utterance of the Master on that occasion, it is plain that the disciples have attempted to give us only a short and fragmentary account of a lengthy deliverance. They did their best, and succeeded as well as could be expected, considering their limitations. Men have seen the fulfillment of some predictions made that evening. The horrors of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D. accord with the dark picture drawn in the discourse. Nation is yet rising against nation. Famines and earthquakes have not ceased. False prophets are still leading many astray. The multiplication of iniquity is not ended, and love continues to wax cold. But where Jesus is reported as assuring the disciples that they are to witness in their mortal career all the events set forth, even declaring, "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished," is it not evident that the reporters failed to understand him, and that their misunderstanding has confused the record? Is it not apparent that times and seasons were somewhat mixed in their thought, and that as a consequence they have failed to make a strictly accurate report of the statements which he made and

of the order in which he made them? In that age, as has been the case in subsequent ages, there was a strong fascination for many minds in the idea that the end of the world was already in sight, and a consequent tendency to connect with that consummation events which are separated from it by vast stretches of time. The numerous failures of the disciples to understand their Lord when he spoke of things to come, both in his own experience and in the experiences of mankind, pretty clearly show that their minds were imbued with that idea and tendency. There is evidence in this discourse of Jesus that he was endeavoring to put them on their guard against mistake in the interpretation of his words. We have the evidence in such words as "Of that day and hour knoweth no one—Ye know not on what day—In an hour that ye think not—In a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not." It is true that there is a note of immediacy in the discourse, but in view of their own record of their failures to understand their Lord it is at least a probability that much of the immediacy was in the minds of the disciples rather than in his statements.

It should not be overlooked that after the resurrection of Jesus he warned them against

becoming exercised on the subject of program and dates in the future progress of the Christian faith, saying, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority." Since they could not know when the great consummation would come they were to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them, and thereafter devote all their energies to the work of witnessing unto him, which work was to be prosecuted "unto the uttermost part of the earth."

With all this in mind, and with other teaching of Jesus in mind, there is nothing in the discourse on the doom of Jerusalem, the coming of the Son of God, and the end of the world, which need disturb our faith. On the contrary, there is much in the discourse to fill the soul with holy awe, and strengthen our hold upon "the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."

CHAPTER IV

PERSISTENT IDEAS

CERTAIN ideas, few in number, appear as strangers in the sayings of Jesus. A thought, born of a passing occasion, breaks forth to surprise us. It is thrust into prominence once or twice, then disappears never to reappear. At least so it seems. But the thought that strikes us as strange, solitary, and out of place may often meet us in other guise. To cite one example, he once said, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." What is the idea embodied in such unexpected words? They have been interpreted as justifying, even sanctifying, human slaughter. As if he had previously said, "Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Can it be that he regarded the angels of his nativity as being out of tune with the Infinite when they sang, "On earth peace"? Did he give the lie to his own promise, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you"? Surely he cannot mean that it was the deliberate purpose of his earthly mission to send the sword to its bloody work. Rather must he mean that

the work of the sword is the inevitable result of his coming into this kind of world on a mission of righteousness and peace. Instead of issuing a declaration of purposefulness he is making a statement of inevitableness. Thus interpreted, his words are not out of place on the lips of the Prince of Peace. The inevitableness of the conflict between the righteousness of the Christ and the sin of the world is a frequent teaching.

Yet while careful study reduces the number of utterances which at first sight appear to be divergent from the main current of his teaching or opposed to it, a few of these problematic statements remain. It may be impossible for us to reconcile some one or more of them with our judgment of what Jesus would have said. Even so, our judgment of what he would have said, and should have said, may be somewhat warped. We are not infallible judges of proprieties in the speech of our Lord. Furthermore, if it be found impossible to harmonize the apparent doctrine of some solitary utterance of Jesus with the idea of God generally accepted by those frequently mentioned as the "thinking persons" of our age, neither does that necessarily discredit the word of the Master as it stands in the record. For, although the present age is confident that it is in ad-

vance of past ages in interpreting the thoughts of God, its leading thinkers stoutly maintain that the whole truth about him has not been made known, but that fresh truth is yet to break forth. Of course such persons cannot be infallible interpreters of the divine mind. Some of their judgments may be reversed in future ages by students of a progressive revelation.

Beyond all this a more serious difficulty is encountered. In the case of a few sayings of the Master it seems to be impossible to fit them into his own teaching as a whole. As a single instance, take the thought which appears to be embodied in the words, "I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." Jesus was not in the habit of advising his followers to cultivate friendship in that way. Indeed, shortly after making this astonishing demand that his disciples make use of money to secure friends who will help them out in times of extremity, he declares, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Still more perplexing is his specification of the mammon of *unrigh eousness* as the kind of mammon to be used in preparing to meet emergencies. And what of the character of these useful friends? Are they proper per-

sons to be custodians of the everlasting habitations? How different that method of effecting an entrance into habitations of endless permanence, from being brought into the Father's house of many mansions by the Christ himself. Nor is the parable in which these words occur any less amazing than the conclusion drawn from it. A dishonest steward, who is under accusation and facing investigation, enters into a scheme with the debtors of his employer to falsify accounts and rob the creditor of his dues. The story makes it plain that steward and debtors are a bunch of thievish rascals. When the creditor finds out how the steward has so manipulated accounts as to insure favors from his partners in guilt he expresses admiration for the shrewdness of the knavery. Having spoken this parable Jesus says that "the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light," and with the next breath calls upon his disciples to make wise use of the mammon of unrighteousness.

This parable of the unrighteous steward looks like a strange and noxious plant in the Lord's garden. One is tempted to ask: "How did such a story get into the record? Is it possible that an enemy hath done this? Can it be that some deceiver, with sinister purpose, while the custodians of the records slept, wrote

the story in as an utterance of Jesus? Or did some disciple of guileless purpose, yet simple mind, forget the exact words of his Teacher, misinterpret his meaning, and thus give us an erroneous and perplexing report?" Does the record need revision by some interpreter thoroughly furnished with modern equipment, and more accurately guided by the Spirit of truth than were the writers of olden time? It must be confessed that on the face of it the parable is a puzzle.

It is true that alleviating statements are made in the Master's comments upon the story. He says that we cannot serve God and mammon, commends faithfulness even in a very little, and teaches that we are to be faithful in dealing with the unrighteous mammon. But after everything possible has been put forth in its favor, this plant appears to many persons to be out of place in the garden of the Lord.

Be that as it may, the garden as a whole is a veritable Eden, which beareth fruit unto life eternal. However this parable may be interpreted, or its presence in the records accounted for, we may be certain that our Lord did not in any occasional utterance attributed to him deny or violate the principles of righteousness which he plainly and repeatedly taught and

by which he lived. The vital content of his teaching is to be judged, not by the apparent inconsistencies of a single reputed utterance, which may have been sadly mutilated in getting from him to us, but by the life he lived and by the doctrines plainly set forth in his recorded teaching as a whole.

A simple method of testing the truth and value of an occasional idea in the reported sayings of this One who spoke as man had not spoken before his arrival, and as man has not spoken since his departure, is to find out whether it is a fit or misfit in the harmony of ideas frequently expressed. And if we should not be able to find a place where it can be introduced without causing confusion, what then? Why, our failure to make it other than a misfit in the heavenly harmony need not trouble us. As a few straggling errors in such a work as Parkman's *France and England in North America* would not destroy the trustworthiness of the history as a whole, so a few errors in conception, repetition, transcription, or translation of the words of Jesus cannot destroy the integrity, or weaken the force, of the main body of sayings harmonious with one another and with his character and acts. These few apparently discordant elements may be eliminated forever from our consideration without dis-

crediting the teaching as a whole, limiting its sweep, checking its movement, or creating a reasonable doubt of its trustworthiness. Upon the occasional ideas little depends. On some other ideas everything depends.

There are persistent ideas in the sayings of Jesus. They appear and reappear again and again. The forms of expression change, and the figures of speech which clothe them are shifted, but the ideas remain the same. They will not let him go, and he will not let them go. They stay with him from beginning to end. It is unnecessary to resort to expedients, either questionable or plausible, to reconcile them with the prevailing spirit and trend of other utterances. They have their own place without disturbing other ideas in their own place. They are in harmonious companionship with neighboring declarations concerning God, man, Satan, good, evil, heaven, and hell. Not only do they fit into the things which he said, but they also fit into the things which he did. They express convictions which tally perfectly with his acts. They harmonize with his dealing with hypocrites, penitents, and other kinds of sinners, as well as with men and women good and true. They harmonize with his habits of companionship, and with both his sympathies and his aversions. It is evident

that he so lived in certain ideas that we may regard them as being of the substance of his life. They could not be separated from him without producing deformity. Take, for instance, his idea of the relationship which he sustained to God, and trace it through all the words spoken from his baptism to his ascension. One who follows it with freedom from bondage to blinding bias can hardly fail of being impressed, not only that it was held and expressed with ceaseless persistence, but also that the elimination of the relationship as he has set it forth would leave us a mental and spiritual cripple as our Messiah. Many of the ideas persistent in his teaching were in harmony with doctrines active and potent in the age in which his voice was heard. Others were sharply at variance with dominant ideas of that age, yet in accord with ideas throbbing like pulse beats from the heart of God in the messages of great prophets of former ages. Ideas, speaking with unwearied persistence throughout his ministry, are both hoary with age and in advance of his age and our age, because, like God himself, they are from everlasting to everlasting.

Examples of persistent ideas in the words of Jesus will occur to anyone familiar with the gospel records. There is the idea of service.

It is a continuous imperative in the Sermon on the Mount. Whoever would completely practice that sermon must live not to be ministered unto but to minister, and somehow give his life for many. The idea makes its insistent demand through precept and parable unto the last injunction of the risen Lord to serve him in the service of humanity unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Again, take that other idea set forth in the commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself. Or is it the same idea of service carried back from the hand to the inner sanctuary of the heart? It was repeatedly expressed in words that could not be misunderstood. The call to follow him was clearly a call to the habit of this kind of love. He was ever revealing and enforcing the idea in his own life, in tears and smiles, in the touch of his hand, in tender cadences of invitation and promise, and even in stern blasts of warning. The potent presence of that idea in all his ministry of healing, teaching, and preaching reminds us of the often-quoted saying, "What you are talks so loud I cannot hear what you say," save that, when this Lover speaks of love, what he is makes it impossible not to hear and heed what he says.

In the course of his teaching there are other

ideas quite as persistently put forth as the ideas of service and love. The latter are more particularly ideas of life in the present world, while others pertain more especially to destiny in some future world. Here he speaks of seedtime; there, of harvest. But the two sets of ideas are inextricably connected. How could it be otherwise? "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Would it be possible for a reliable Teacher to have views of harvest disconnected with his views of seeding? So vital are the relations between the persistent ideas in the teaching of Jesus that to accept some and reject others, or even to cherish some and ignore others, would be fatal to the trustworthiness and worth of all. To establish that he was right in his ideas of conduct but wrong in his ideas of destiny would convict him of folly, and consign the entire fabric of his teaching to the rubbish heap.

Coming to the loom for an illustration, it may be said that every persistent idea in his witness to the truth is interwoven with other ideas as threads of warp are woven into the structure of a web, running through the fabric from beginning to end. Some of these threads may be as bright as threads of silver and others of somber hue, but not one thread of warp can

be spared from the web. To eliminate a single thread of warp would damage the entire fabric. To eliminate several threads would ruin the fabric. Here is a Teacher who solemnly declares that he came into the world for the purpose of bearing witness to the truth, and that his words are spirit and life, that hearing and doing his sayings means safety, while hearing without doing means ruin. The elimination of one of the persistently interwoven ideas in those sayings could not fail of weakening the web. The elimination of several would ruin the web. The teaching of Jesus must stand or fall with these persistent ideas. If he did not say these things, no one can know what he said. If he did not mean what he said in expressing these ideas, no one can be sure that he meant anything that he said. If in these ideas repeatedly expressed we had not testimony to the truth, the trustworthiness of Jesus as a witness to the truth in any of his reputed utterances would be gone.

In these persistent ideas we find the message of the Christ to the world. In them we have the statement of his purpose and the prediction of its accomplishment in the world. They set forth the truth concerning seedtime and harvest in the life of man.

SEEDTIME

CHAPTER V

THE SOWER IN HIS FIELD

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. . . . He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one;* and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the

world; and the reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear."

Jesus did not always explain his parables. Probably not often. He was wont to cast a parable forth into the world to make its own way, and take its chances, among minds and hearts of every sort. In this parable of the tares is a teaching so precisely and clearly explained that wayfaring men—yea, fools—need not err therein. According to the Master's statement he has here drawn a likeness to the kingdom of heaven. Certainly not a caricature of that Kingdom. In its main features it is so explicitly set forth that it must be a true likeness. And if a true likeness, it must be in some comprehensive sense a program of the earthly course of the kingdom of heaven: too brief to be a statement of details, but accurate as a sketch in broad outline. We have here, in its principal features, a picture of the

full sweep of the working of the Master's earthly mission, drawn by his own hand.

The kingdom of heaven, here likened to seeding, growing, and harvesting a crop, is the same kingdom often called by the Master "the kingdom of God." We find him speaking of the Kingdom as the "kingdom of heaven" in one sentence, and as the "kingdom of God" in the following sentence. Evidently, the two expressions were used interchangeably. Although a kingdom, existing, in part at least, in an earthly field, it was the kingdom of heaven because it was none other than the kingdom of God. In this chapter it is described as being like other things—a mustard seed, leaven, hidden treasure, a pearl of great price, a net cast into the sea; but, more comprehensively, it is like the production of a crop in the field of a husbandman. The chief element in the processes of the growth and extension of the kingdom of God is expressed in that word so often on the Master's lips, "life." Therefore Jesus never attempted to run the boundaries of this Kingdom or to make any exhaustive statement of its qualities and dimensions. Its life is boundless, and throbs with forces which baffle human understanding.

Does it seem strange for the Kingdom which is above all other kingdoms to be pictured in

the likeness which Jesus here uses? It should not be strange to any person unto whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. No well-instructed disciple of Christ expects to behold the chief characteristics of any earthly kingdom in a field of wheat. The kingdom of heaven is of a different order. Probably the simple reason why he never said such a thing as that the kingdom of heaven was like the kingdom of Cæsar or any other monarch of a political realm was that in its real nature it was about as unlike them as anything on earth or in heaven could be.

And the reason for this unlikeness is not far to seek. Jesus was engaged in promoting a living organism rather than an organization. While organization may be helpful, or even essential, the Kingdom comes by the powers and in the processes of germination and growth. Such processes in the natural world were invisible in his day, and in the spiritual world they are invisible in our day—a thought emphasized in the parable of the seed growing as a man "knoweth not how."

This view of the Kingdom appears in varied aspects in other parables. On some occasions, without recourse to formal parable, Jesus likens the children of the Kingdom to branches of a vine, to trees bringing forth good fruit,

and in other ways refers to the Kingdom in terms of growing life. Unquestionably, the parable at the beginning of this chapter is in the procession of persistent ideas in the teaching of our Lord.

When his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field," he began his explanation in these words, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man." Here is a Sower who does a greater work than merely to scatter seed; and in his person he is vastly more than the agent of an overlord. He is in the field with authority and proprietorship. He is Master of the task through the season, and when the time for harvesting arrives he is the Lord of harvest. The task which he sees through to its end is no small undertaking to be easily and quickly accomplished. It stretches on through ages of unremitting toil. Persons and forces, both of this world of sense and of the world unseen, are enlisted in the work. Other persons and forces without number are affected by its progress and outcome. He is manager of it, and the supreme authority in it at the culmination of its earthly course. Thus he is its Author and Finisher. Sowing, growing, nourishing, harvesting—everything—depends on him. In a greater sense than any hus-

bandman in the vegetable kingdom can be, he is the producer in the harvest field of this spiritual kingdom of God. The farmer has heat or cold, wet or dry, handed down to him out of the skies, sometimes to the damage or even to the destruction of the crop. But when you consider this parable in connection with other teachings of Jesus, you find in him the calm assurance that he holds life-giving forces in his control, that in the deepest sense of the term he is the Life-Giver.

We shall miss a vast treasure of truth concerning the source of the Sower's power if we fail to catch in thought and hold to the heart the significance of the word "come" as it fell from the lips of Jesus, hinting at the secret of his presence as Life-Giver in this world. According to his allusions to the story of his own life, he came from a far country.

Much has been made of the reference to Jesus as a carpenter, and of the implication that until the beginning of his ministry such was his occupation. The only proof that he was a carpenter is found in the single question asked by his fellow townsmen in Nazareth, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" or, according to Mark, "Is not this the carpenter?" Conceding that he was both a carpenter and reputedly the son of a carpenter, it might be possible to

make too little of that fact. Certainly it would be possible to make too much of it. He was so much more something else than the Carpenter of Nazareth that any work which he may have done with tools, or any life which he may have lived as a man of the shop, is of comparatively small consequence.

No warrant is to be found in the story or words of Jesus for an attempt to hold him within the bounds of caste or clan. He is the boundless Christ. No class or order is entitled to any monopoly of him, or has any claim upon him for special interest or attention. No hint is to be found in his utterances that he is more the Christ of the shops than of the highways, grain fields, vineyards, or fishing smacks. Neither exclusively nor partially is he the Christ of anybody. The Christ of the mechanic he was and is, yet equally of the plowman who "homeward plods his weary way," the housewife kneading dough in the kitchen, the fisherman casting his net into the sea, the officer under authority and exercising authority, the tax-gatherer at the receipt of custom, the child playing in the market place.

When he went forth into his ministry the work of the carpenter appears to have dropped out of sight and mind. Did ever a person leave shopwork more completely than Jesus of

Nazareth? Nowhere in the record do habits or speech indicate that he is a craftsman. He speaks the language of one who lives by lakes and streams, in grain fields and orchards; who walks in glad companionship with flowers, birds, and domestic animals, and is no stranger to creatures of the wild. You often find him in synagogues, homes, and boats, as well as in solitary nooks among the hills, whence help comes to his up-looking soul, but never in a shop. He pictures life in various occupations and surroundings, always apart from the realm of sawdust and shavings. With easy familiarity he speaks of fishing, cooking, trading, shepherding, fruit-growing, sowing, reaping, but not of constructing things with tools. The tools mentioned by him are of the farm and field, such as plow, ax, and sickle. In speaking of the use of implements for cutting he refers to processes of harvesting, or of pruning and removing fruitless and useless things from fields of growth. He is ever thinking and speaking of his place of labor as a field for bringing forth fruit.

The absence from his discourse of the ideas and terminology of the shop is profoundly significant, and the reason for it must be simply this—that his mission is in the realm of life. Because of that vital fact it is as impossible

for the carpenter shop to retain the teaching Jesus as for the tomb to hold the crucified Lord. He leaves the little place where things are manufactured, for the vast fields of germination and growth. Henceforth he thinks and speaks in terms of grain fields, orchards, vineyards, and pasture lands. Such regions constitute the realm of his illustration.

Thus his departure from the shop is infinitely more than a change in physical habitat. It marks the emergence of the spirit. A creative spirit goes forth into the boundless universe of life. He saw at least the possibility of heavenly life and fruitage in every human pilgrim journeying along earthly paths. Therefore his ministry among these heavenly possibilities as Teacher, Saviour, and Lord, in all its phases, throbs with life. The very fact that he spent many years as an artisan emphasizes the significance of his complete separation from the ideas of that occupation to dwell among the ideas of germination and vital development. The voice that speaks in Galilee may be heard as the sound of many waters, or as the sound of many thunders, but never is it heard as the sound of many hammers. Maybe there was a time when Jesus spoke as a carpenter, felt as a carpenter, thought as a carpenter, but when there came a divine crisis in

his life, sending him forth in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, he put away the habits and speech of the craftsman. It is as if a Thomas Edison were to become a Luther Burbank in a day.

But the home from which the Sower came to his field was farther back and higher up than a carpenter's shop on the hill of Nazareth. He spoke of his presence in the field as the arrival of one who had come from some place where "other palms are won." According to his own testimony, it literally is true that "trailing clouds of glory" did he come from God, who was his home. Amid the tragic vicissitudes of the field this glory did not pass away. On the last night of his visible sojourn in the earthly field, with the horrors of crucifixion awaiting him on the morrow, he almost lost sight of the earthly in visions of the blessedness of the heavenly. The secret of it? Why, he brought the power of the heavenly with him when he came. Not merely from heaven, but also with heaven, he came bringing abundant life to the earthly harvest field. In the Spirit of God, in the very life of God as we clearly see in further teaching, he gives and develops life eternal. Whatever God can do in imparting life to man and fostering it unto eternal years this Christ of God affirms

that he can do, as will appear more specifically in subsequent chapters. If his words are true, not as the world giveth, not as human parents give, does he give. No other can give the life of the Kingdom. Only this One, who by the tomb of Bethany and in the upper room in Jerusalem quietly affirms that he is the life. By no other way than by this One, who is the Way, can anyone reach this life. If any will not come unto him that they may have life, the life is not for them. For such work this Sower has come.

In various similitudes Jesus speaks of life-giving power, not only for the body but more especially for the soul, as proceeding from himself. He teaches his disciples that their life from him is like the life flowing from the vine into the branches. He represents himself as doing all that can be done and all that needs to be done to impart, nourish, sustain, and develop eternal life in man.

While all this comes out distinctly in the Gospel according to John, is it not implicit in the parable at the head of this chapter? Were not Jesus all that he represents himself as being in the teaching of the fourth Gospel, could he do all that he represents himself as doing in his explanation of the parable? Could any less a Life-Giver than the Christ who

speaks in that Gospel carry out the program announced in the parable?

"The field is the world." Every tiller of the soil well knows that in agricultural pursuits the size and quality of the crop depends largely upon the location of the field and the character of the soil. Does this hold true in realms of spiritual life and fruitage? Here is a Life-Giver not addicted to needless multiplication of words in speaking of his task. Surely, it cannot be without significance that when he states the scope of his mission in broad outlines he regards it worth while to say, "The field is the world." The statement may be understood as indicating simply the extent of the field, meaning that it includes all inhabited regions on the globe. Unquestionably, the Master does mean that. Empowered by him his disciples go on sowing among all the nations. So thoroughly are they one with him in the task of bringing the field to fruitage that receiving them is receiving both him and the Father who sent him. All this is made plain in his own words. But does not the significance of his statement that the field is the world lie more in the character of the field than in its geographical or ethnic extent? No doubt his task is great because the field is wide, but assuredly the task is difficult be-

cause the field is worldly. Whatever the origin of the human, whatever the forces, processes, and events in its history, it was not a heavenly race to which Jesus came. The field is the world of worldly nature, besetments, and allurements; of worldly elements, influences, and conditions in general. It is the kind of human world made visible in the Master's brief characterization and description of it, recorded in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew. He makes it known to those who are going forth at his bidding to speak the word of life from him that they go into a world inhospitable to heavenly truth and inimical to heavenly lives.

CHAPTER VI

WHEAT

"THE good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom." In view of all that the Sower has said of his nature, his powers, and his mission the least that these words concerning the good seed can mean must be that the life which he imparts and promotes is the same kind of life that thrives in the heaven whence he came. Since like begets like, the One who comes from the glory of the heavenly with the avowed purpose of gathering from earthly fields friends fit to be taken into his Father's house could hardly be the author of life of meaner than heavenly quality. It does not surprise us to hear him say in praying to the Father for a group of these sons of the Kingdom, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world," and to ask "that they all may be one; even, as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us." Let it be remembered that this thought of heavenly origin and quality is often implied in Christ's teaching where it is not definitely expressed. Yet in other places it is plainly asserted: for instance, when he declares to Nicodemus that

the children of the Kingdom are born from above, and that except one be thus born he cannot enter into or even see the kingdom of God. The advancing stages of the life thus begotten are evidently in his mind when he speaks of such contrasts as the difference between children of the world and children of light, or laying up treasure on earth and laying it up in heaven.

It is evident that Jesus regards it as no pleasure trip or easy task to leave his dwelling in the high and holy place to sow heavenly seed in earthly soil, and bring to maturity in the world lives not of the world. Some of the perils and ugly experiences encountered in the task are set forth in the preceding parable of the Sower, a parable quite explicitly explained as illustrating the early stages in the progress of the kingdom of God in the human field. It illustrates in open fields and the light of day certain phases of the life of the Spirit urged upon the attention of Nicodemus in the seclusion of a private apartment by night. Since this ruler of the Jews is a man of the schools instead of the fields Jesus avoids agricultural symbols, to move among ideas and speak in terms familiar to his hearer. But whether he speaks to the theologian by night or the multitude on the seashore by day, the

life is from a heavenly source. In one place he speaks of it as not born of the flesh, but as a life of the Spirit in the midst of earthly conditions. In the other place the life is from seed brought to the field by the Sower. It is not indigenous to the soil.

Unquestionably, the introduction of heavenly seed into earthly soil is a venture involving serious risks, together with boundless possibilities. It is the kind of venture that the Master can afford to make at the expense of unspeakable sacrifices and pains. Some of the seed thus sown becomes unfruitful. Life divine is presented to persons who have no appreciation of such a high order of existence. They can appreciate the value of such earthly crops as wheat, potatoes, and tobacco, and as reported in the newspapers, may even blindly venture into the spiritual realm so far as to pray for rain when the tobacco crop is likely to fail by reason of drought; they appreciate the food which perishes, but they cannot understand or value at its priceless worth the food which endures unto everlasting life. They receive the heavenly seed as a solidly trodden path might receive grains of wheat, to be devoured by the first bird happening to fly that way. Then there are shallow and shifty souls who receive a divine idea with gladness

and hold it a little while with enthusiasm, but lack strength of character to resist the allurement of a newer and more gaudy idea, or to stand against ridicule or downright opposition. The appearing of a spiritual shoot in their nature is like the springing up of a plant in the meager soil covering a ledge of rock, to wither and die under the rays of a scorching sun. Sadder yet is the spectacle of a likable person, with a character possessing elements of strength and nobility, appreciative of values in two worlds and susceptible to the appeal of both the material and the spiritual, a person of great possibilities for the life of the kingdom of God, who nevertheless permits the thorns and weeds of the worldly to supplant the wheat of the heavenly. "This is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Employing terms used by our Lord in explaining the nature of the kingdom of God to his nocturnal guest, it may be said that the beginnings of a life born of the Spirit succumb to that which is born of the flesh. Such failures stand out in the Master's parable over against the successful life pictured in these words, "He that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it;

who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Precisely how it is possible for the worldly thus to prevail over the heavenly in a realm which is regarded as being under the sway of a righteous and loving God our Lord does not explain. Why he offers no explanation he does not tell. Baffling to our understanding are the tragedies in these earthly fields. In this world the children of the Kingdom must have tribulation of some sort. Their heavenly life is beset by dangers. They are subject to enticements and temptations of many kinds. The teaching of false prophets and deceivers is so plausible that if such a thing were possible, they would deceive the very elect. The task of the Sower of good seed is to make human beings, surrounded by such influences, partakers of the divine nature, and so to transform them, that they shall in some real sense be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect. Since that can mean no less than a life of love for all, including one's enemies, a life delivered from lust and greed, a life pure in the midst of vileness and contaminating contacts, it must be a life utterly impossible for unaided human nature.

This one who undertakes to produce such lives in such a world believes that he is equal

to the task. His words indicate a conviction that he could live as good a life in this world as with his Father in the glory of heaven, and that what he can do any child of the Kingdom may do also by his help. He has much to say for the possibility of success for the heavenly life in the earthly field. In depicting the experiences of the good seed in earthly soil he gives the assurance of abundant fruitage, even unto a hundredfold. It is noticeable that in the explanation of his parable he is not teaching that a hundred lives shall come from a single seed, and that thus one life shall be multiplied into a hundred lives, but he is stressing the fact of abundance in the life of the individual. The genius of the parable from beginning to end puts the emphasis on the experiences of the individual life: "This is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold." Notwithstanding all perils of beaten paths, hungry birds, rocks, and thorns, here is opportunity for fruitage of a hundredfold in a single life.

Not only does he take pains to declare that publicans and harlots may be gathered into the Kingdom, but that even harder cases are not altogether hopeless. Although it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle

than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, it is possible to get the rich man in. Furthermore, it is possible for the Master's disciples to stay in the Kingdom, because, although one like unto a strong man armed be against them, One stronger than he is for them. They need be anxious for nothing. The God who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field will care for them. And surely his supreme care is for the life of the Spirit. Though they go astray and sin against him, he is a God of loving kindness and tender mercy who will forgive if they repent and turn unto him. Since this One who bids us forgive from the heart "until seventy times seven" cannot expect us to be more godlike in forgiving than God himself, there can be no limitation upon the divine forgiveness except our failure to repent. No wonder the Master calls to us, "Fear not, little flock." Why? Because it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom. Knowing exactly what we are, and all the foes that beset us, it fills the heart of the Eternal with pleasure to give us the Kingdom. We have the word of Jesus for it that so long as we follow him no man is able to snatch us out of the Father's hand.

Nevertheless, it is true that, according to

the teaching of Jesus, men may fail to receive the life of the Kingdom and thus pass through the world and out of the world without it. Moreover, like the life of the good seed in the parable of the sower, it may be lost, in the sense that we have the power to neglect it, or choke it with selfishness or worldliness, or in some other way cause it to perish by our own default. Yet this need not be, since "All things are possible to him that believeth." Ah! believeth how much? Why, just enough to yield ourselves to the Master to do the will of the Father as revealed in the Christ, and to trust our case to him. What though in the world we have tribulation, let us cheer up at his bidding. He has overcome the world; and if we will receive it, he is able to make our life the overcoming life. Then it will not be the boast of misplaced confidence for us to exclaim in the familiar words of the apostle, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

CHAPTER VII

TARES

"THE tares are the sons of the evil one." This is a "hard saying." Many are the hard sayings of Jesus. Many are the persons who ask, like certain disciples in his day, "Who can hear such statements?" There are beautiful facts, also ugly facts, in human life. There are happy experiences, also painful experiences, in the workings of the kingdom of God. In his sayings to his disciples as he sat with them for their Last Supper together in the world-field, the Master dwelt chiefly upon the glad and beautiful things of the Kingdom in words which have comforted his own in all succeeding generations. Two days before, speaking to a multitude of hearers, either in the inclosure of the Temple or somewhere in the open, he appears to have dwelt wholly upon ugly things in life and awful things in destiny. The stinging message thrust upon sinful souls on Tuesday was quite as true and quite as important as the message of peace breathed like a heavenly chant into receptive spirits on Thursday evening. Both messages were needed by the kind of world

that crucified the Son of God. Both are needed by the kind of world which now crucifies that Son of God afresh and puts him to an open shame. The supper with the little group of friends Thursday evening was not the time or place for a message of woe. The encounter with the bloodthirsty foes of Christ and his truth on Tuesday was no time or place for lullabies of peace. Since there are yet opposers to be rebuked and followers to be comforted, the habitual neglect of either message would make the messenger a false teacher, and upon the false teacher is pronounced the Master's woe.

Jesus persistently disturbed his auditors with disagreeable utterances. No soul was ever anchored in a more restful confidence that God is in his heaven than this One who had recently arrived from God's heaven; and no soul was ever more distressed by the conviction that all is not right with the world. Because of ever-present wrong in the world, ever-diabolical and destructive wrong, he had come into the world to exert his power and sacrifice his life in opposing the wrong intrenched in human lives and in winning men to be valiant for the right. No doubt the angels were within the bounds of truth in speaking to the shepherds of the coming of

such a Person for such a purpose as good tidings. A righteous heaven could regard the tidings in no other way. Nevertheless, much of the truth spoken by such a Saviour in such a world as this could be no other than unwelcome tidings to most of the people, and positively offensive to many of the people. Jesus continued to declare painful truth throughout his incarnate ministry to its tragic end. As was to be expected, bad men rejected the truth and crucified the One who bore witness to it. Moreover, it was distinctly unwelcome to some persons not bad according to the ideas of goodness then in vogue, and according to some generally accepted ethical standards of the present time. Witness Nicodemus and the young man who would not meet the hard conditions of discipleship which the Master set before him. Indeed, so thorough a preacher of truth that hurt was Jesus that from the day when many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him unto the present time many persons professing to be his disciples have been repudiating sayings which are hard for them to accept, and declining to walk with him along the rugged path of his teaching.

This second picture in the chapter of parables recorded by Matthew contains a

vivid statement of disturbing truth repeatedly expressed on other occasions. It is significant that when the disciples came to their Teacher seeking an explanation of the parable, they did not ask him to explain the parable of the sower of good seed, or of the field, or of the wheat, but that they said, "Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field." The tares constituted the feature of the story which most forcibly arrested and held their attention. Was it not the purpose of Jesus thus to impress them? Not by accident does he make the tares so conspicuous as to be the center of observation and discussion. This parable with the tares eliminated would be quite as impossible as with the wheat eliminated. These tares were so obnoxious as to be an eyesore to the householder, his servants, the neighbors, and all persons who passed that way. Whenever the owner looked at his field the tares were a plague to his thoughts. Their presence among the wheat subjected him to unpleasant criticism. Persons who did not know what a mean trick had been played on him would be likely to say: "Surely, the owner of this field must be a slovenly husbandman. Whence hath it these tares if not through his negligence?" But there they were in the field, an unavoidable and troublesome fact.

One might skillfully avoid taking seriously the presence of tares in the field of this parable were they not so numerous in other fields. Were other fields weedless, it might be conjectured that probably tares had no place in the actual teaching of Jesus, but that this story was a legendary narrative which became current among pessimists and traditionalists, or that he was misunderstood and incorrectly reported; that while he may have mentioned tares they were not such incorrigible tares as these appear to have been. But any explanation of these tares which explains them out of existence, or out of their bad character, is made impossible by the presence of similar tares in most fields of the Master's teaching and experience. To his vision children of the evil one are much in evidence everywhere outside God's heaven. When he likens the kingdom of heaven to a certain king who would make a reckoning with his servants, at the center of the picture is a fellow who owes the king an enormous debt which is freely canceled. After being thus released he immediately proves himself to be a heartless rascal utterly devoid of gratitude or mercy. When in another parable the lord of a vineyard lets it out to husbandmen, they show up as robbers and murderers, sons of the evil one, cursing

the earth by the worst characteristics of their family. The Master makes a tour of Galilee and finds the children of the evil one so numerous and so bad that he pronounces woes upon the chief cities. He goes up to Jerusalem and finds evil men intrenched as religious teachers in the select circles of the city. He enters the house of God and encounters there sons of the evil one, bargaining and cheating within the sacred precincts, and making the place a den of robbers. When all the nations are gathered before the Son of man, lo, the children of the evil one are there. They haunt him. Human creatures, breathing threatening and slaughter against him because of his exposure and condemnation of their wickedness, pursue him all the way from Bethlehem to Calvary seeking his ruin. They dog his footsteps, watch for indiscretions or technical violations of the Mosaic law, put puzzling questions, hoping to entangle him in mazes of casuistry and thickets of words; misjudge him, call him vile names, lie against him. Where are the tares? Outside God's heaven, in the visions of the Son of man, where are they not? Although the facts of their presence and character were heart-breaking to him and are sadly depressing to us, they cannot be eliminated from the record without wrecking the entire body of

his teaching and discrediting the whole story of his life.

Looking closely into the nature of tares and the distinction between tares and wheat, it is evident that in the thought of Jesus tares are not immature or stunted stalks of wheat. Their presence in the field is not to be accounted for by any theory of hybridism or of freakish, feeble, or arrested development. By no stretch of interpretation are they to be regarded as productive plants of any useful kind in any stage of growth or variety of existence. The sons of the evil one are not sons of the Kingdom undeveloped or embryonic. In origin, growth, and destiny they are alien to the kingdom of heaven.

In the Sermon on the Mount some are denounced by him as false prophets who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves. They are also likened to corrupt trees which cannot bring forth good fruit. They are evil men who out of their evil treasure bring forth evil things. They are hearts out of which "come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings." In public address he characterized some of them as sons of hell, blind guides, hypocrites; as being full of extortion and excess of all uncleanness, outwardly appearing right-

eous unto men but inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

True, he does not characterize all the tare-children as so flagrantly wicked. Not all exhibit what a James might call "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness." Some appear to be just naughty. The young ruler before mentioned who was not far from the Kingdom, yet outside, is a case in point. The man who having put his hand to the plow looks back, is not positively bad. He is not making havoc in the field. He is no such abomination in the community as the son of hell who, according to the solemn affirmation of Jesus, compasses sea and land to make one proselyte twofold more a son of hell than himself. Yet that hesitant plowman is declared to be unfit for the kingdom of God. There may be many degrees in sinfulness, but no degree of sinfulness, however petty it may be, can qualify as any kind of righteousness before this Sower of the good seed. He has said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Again he has said, "No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Insistence upon the presence of evil in the character of all human tares is of the warp of his teaching. He gives no encouragement for regarding tares

as belated wheat; evil as goodness just missing the mark for a while, or evil men as unadjusted sons of God.

Strange as it may seem, some children of the evil one are not aware of the fact, but go marching on through life cheered by the comfortable persuasion that they are children of the Kingdom. Jesus represents them as saying that they have prophesied in his name, by his name have cast out demons, and have done many mighty works. Others are like the man who, instead of trusting in the mercy of the Lord upon sinners, trusted in himself that he was righteous and set others at naught. So sure was he of his superior righteousness that he could stand in the Temple praying with himself, thanking God that he was "not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican," who was standing afar off crying for mercy. Confident that he was worshiping the Lord in the beauty of holiness, this gentleman did not hesitate to mention his scrupulous faithfulness in the performance of his religious duties. Such assurance in talking to God would indicate that he had the witness of a spirit, but evidently in the thought of the Master it was his own spirit, and either a lying or a deluded spirit or both. Some children of the evil one are

equal to carrying on an argument with Jesus to prove their good standing as the free-born children of a heavenly race. "We were not born of fornication," they said. "We have one Father, even God." What did Jesus think of them? This is what he said to them; "If God were your Father, ye would love me; . . Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do."

It hardly seems necessary to dwell at length upon the kind of work wrought by the children of the evil one in the world field or the kind of influence exerted by them there. It should not be overlooked that Jesus speaks of certain ones as being useless rather than noxious. He does that in the parable of the talents, and of the pounds, and in other places. The barren fig tree is a little worse than useless. It cumbers the ground by absorbing from soil and sun those elements which otherwise might increase the fruitage of the field. From such damage by uselessness the works of the children of the evil one as set forth in the teaching of our Lord run the gamut of positive wrongdoing all the way down to diabolism incarnate. These evildoers sow the seed of hatred and murder in the Lord's harvest field. They accuse righteous men of being in alliance with Beelzebub. As false prophets and teachers

they seduce people from the truth, and lead them astray. They go so far as to present false Christs to the world. In their ranks are brothers who deliver up their own brothers to death, fathers who thus deliver up their children, and children who deliver up their parents. They persecute, scourge, kill, crucify prophets sent forth by the Lord to speak his truth and minister in his spirit. They fill the measure of iniquity to the brim. They shut up the kingdom of heaven against men to make them sons of perdition. All this and more is contained in the Master's indictment of them. No wonder he exclaims to a group of the worst of them, "Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of Gehenna?" [1]

It has been said that every human soul has absolute value in the sight of God, even that every human soul is of infinite worth. Certainly, Jesus never said it. Did he ever think it? Did every serpent addressed by him in the denunciation just quoted have absolute worth in his sight? He did say to certain persons: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of

[1] Marginal reading.

men." Is it possible to find any trace of infinite worth in his idea of good-for-nothing human salt? He did say of the person who causes one of the little ones who believe on him to stumble that "It is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." Whatever else that statement may mean, can it mean that Jesus regards that man as a person of infinite value either under water or out of the water? Did he recognize absolute value in one of that company denounced by him as sons of the devil with wills set on doing the lusts of their father? If it be said that every one of them was a person of infinite possibilities for good, who might have been of immeasurable value to the kingdom of heaven, would not that article in one's creed be born of amiable conjecture instead of anything either expressed or implied in the words of Christ? Whatever our theories of origins and values may be, could our Lord have made it plainer than he has in all that he said about the children of the evil one represented by the tares of the field, that as he meets them, deals with them, speaks of them and to them, they are not in his thought children of God?

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENEMY

"THE enemy that sowed them is the devil."

We are viewing a period of seedtime and growth for the kingdom of heaven. The field is the world. The Son of man, Sower of good seed, is in the field. Children of the Kingdom are in the field. Children of the evil one are in the field. And the devil is in the field. Even though his presence there may not be explained, it must not be ignored. If we are to get the facts concerning this seedtime and the harvest, the statements of Jesus in regard to the devil and his activities in the field must be considered and accorded due weight. Since our Teacher came into the world to this end, that he should bear witness unto the truth, it would be unpardonable folly, if not disastrous folly, for those who would know the whole truth, to ignore, alter, or parry his witness to the truth about Satan.

The first fact standing out against Satan in the parable of the tares of the field is that he is an enemy. He comes into the field as the enemy of the Lord and his kingdom, for the express purpose of doing mischief. As an

enemy he was seen in the preceding parable, which pictures the sowing of good seed in different varieties of soil, a parable recorded in each of the first three Gospels, repeating the same story of the devil taking away the word of God sown in the heart. In these parables by the sea Jesus was showing in pictures things which he had already seen taking place in the field. Although it was not yet high noon in the day of his ministry, the enemy had been getting in his work, and the baneful results were apparent. From the outset Satan had been following the Sower, both to snatch away the good seed from hearts and to scatter seed of tares. Later in his ministry Jesus sent forth seventy disciples, "two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come," giving them authority "over all the power of the enemy"—because Satan was yet in the field. So late as the last evening before the crucifixion, in that solemn hour when the Master and the twelve were eating the Passover together, there arose a contention among the disciples "which of them was accounted to be greatest." After their Lord had rebuked them by washing their feet as the servant of all, and with plain words of admonition, he said to Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he

might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." The enemy was yet at the center of the field, not far from every one of that little band, so near, so cunning, that he had already prevailed upon one of them to betray his Lord.

Jesus makes it evident that from the first he recognized in Satan no weakling in the field, but a powerful opponent. As there is a Son of man with power back of the good seed and the sons of the Kingdom in their development, so is there a devil with power back of the tares. There he moves in the darkness like a strong man fully armed. Paul speaks of Satan as "the god of this world," saying that he "hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn *upon them*." Jesus does not go quite so far as to call Satan the god of this world or any other world. But three times in the last six days of his incarnate ministry he calls the enemy "the prince of this world," declaring that this prince hath nothing in him, hath been judged, and shall be cast out. He also speaks of the enemy as having a kingdom.

His conception of Satan as the powerful enemy appears in numerous vivid contrasts which stand out in his teaching. Some of them

have been mentioned. In this parable of the tares of the field the Son of man is working by day, and over against him the devil is working by night. When Satan is seen as a "strong man fully armed," over against him is a Stronger than he who shall overcome him. On a certain occasion the Master had cast out a demon and the multitudes were amazed at his power. But the Pharisees made light of it, assuring the people that such a trick was easy for him. They said, "This man doth not cast out demons but by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons." Jesus did not question the accuracy of their reference to the enemy as prince of the demons, but he pointed out the weakness of their accusation in assuming that Satan would be such a fool as to enter into an alliance to defeat himself and wreck his own kingdom. "If Satan casteth out Satan, . . . how then shall his kingdom stand?" he asks. And presently he continues, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." In those words the Spirit of God opposes Satan, and the kingdom of God is set in opposition to Satan's kingdom. Again, in the parable of the sheep and the goats we see the Son of man with his angels on the heights at the beginning of the parable, and the devil with his angels in the depths at the

end. Such contrasts leave no room for doubt that Jesus regards the devil as an enemy, present and potent in the affairs of men. It would be too heavy a tax on credulity to believe that in the mind of so clear a thinker and so conscientious a teacher as Jesus there could be a real and mighty Person on one side of the contrast and only a vague figure of speech on the other side.

Not only does he have considerable to say to the people about the adversary, but on at least two occasions he is on record as speaking directly to the devil himself. Every reader of the New Testament is familiar with the account of his interview with Satan in the wilderness of Judæa at the beginning of his ministry. There Satan tests him by trying to persuade him to indulge self, to glorify self, and by adopting worldly methods, to take the kingdoms of the world for himself. At first it is his strategy to put Jesus on the defensive. He challenges him to furnish proof of his divine Sonship, saying, "If thou art the Son of God," do this and do that. Finally, after that kind of parley and apt quotation of Scripture on both sides, he comes out into the open with an astounding proposition. He sets before this Man of Galilee and Son of the Highest a quick way, albeit a devilish way, to

win the world, by offering him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them if only he will worship their king. As much as to say, "These kingdoms are mine, and you never can gain possession of them without reckoning with me and acknowledging my supremacy in them." The underlying idea in this temptation, together with its adoption in practice, is as ancient as the Eden story and as modern as the most recent political campaign. When in Rome must not one do as Romans do or fail of exerting a good influence in Roman circles? When in the domain of the prince of this world must not one resort to some worldly methods, which in the last analysis are the methods of the prince, for the sake of reaching good results, or suffer defeat in striving for those results? Has not Satan successfully worked this scheme with many an individual and many an organization? Would not many a lost reputation and many a lost soul have been saved had the tempted one taken his stand, and maintained his stand, with the Christ of God, who said to the tempter, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve"?

Let the foregoing interview be kept in mind in connection with another episode taking place

near the end of the visible sojourn of Jesus in the earthly field. He has reached the third period of his Galilæan ministry, and has withdrawn into northern Galilee to visit Jerusalem no more until he shall return with face and will steadfastly set to tread the path that must lead to Calvary. He has openly denounced the hypocrisy of Pharisees and scribes with stinging rebukes spoken to their face. They are intriguing against him, determined to accomplish his ruin and thus discredit his teaching. A crisis has been reached at Capernaum, where many of his disciples have turned back to walk no more with him. He has put to the twelve the question, "Would ye also go away?" and Simon Peter has answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." Surely, it is unthinkable that one under the influence of Satan or any evil spirit would make that declaration. The Master journeys on with the twelve as far north as Cæsarea Philippi. In a confidential talk along the way he has asked, "Who say ye that I am?" Again Simon Peter speaks up, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In response to that avowal the Master's heart overflows in the benediction, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for

flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Thus he pronounces Peter blessed by the Holy Spirit speaking in his soul. Immediately Jesus assures them that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and the third day be raised up. Since he is the Christ it cannot be otherwise. But Peter, the impetuous and loving Peter, cannot bear the thought of the agony and shame of crucifixion for his Lord, and he speaks out in protest, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee." We are told that at this point Jesus turns about, rebukes Peter, and saith, "Get thee behind me, Satan: . . . for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Do we not miss the point if we think of Jesus as calling Peter the worst name in human speech? Can it be that the loving Lord addresses a sincere and enthusiastic disciple as Satan, however mistaken some of that disciple's ideas of Messiahship may be? Must it not be that he recognizes the real presence of the real Satan, seeking to use a blundering yet well-meaning disciple as a tool to tempt his Lord to shun the cross, and that to the same Satan who tested him in the wilderness he speaks again, "Get thee behind me, Satan"?

Be these questions answered as they may, it

is evident from all that Jesus said concerning the evil one that to him Satan was a reality. However embodied or existent, the devil to him was a real enemy; a real presence, power, tempter, peril; a real source of evil in the affairs of men—as real as any other being or thing near or far in the vast realm of the invisible. If the Master spoke with authority and told the truth, such a reality the devil was in the world of Cæsar nineteen hundred years ago. Is the devil less than that in our world to-day?

"The field is the world." As Jesus looked upon this field long ago he saw therein the Son of man, the sons of the Kingdom, the devil, and the sons of the evil one. In the Lord's view how long were such conditions to last?

CHAPTER IX

GROWING TOGETHER

"Let both grow together until the harvest."

Jesus ever combined the forward look with a soulful interest in the present task. Glimpses of his comprehensive view of the future were frequently breaking forth in his talk. He needed no Spirit of truth to show him things to come, for that Seer divine was his own Spirit. Face and will were always steadfastly set toward the path ahead. What did he see? Mansions at the end of the road, but more dungeons than mansions in the toilsome course of the kingdom of God in earthly fields. Well he knew on that last journey to the city of a nation's hope that he must tread a hard path, leading through gardens of pain. He saw the cross awaiting him at Jerusalem, and beyond that cross he beheld other crosses for the crucifixion of his soul. He knew that in coming years men would crucify him afresh and put him to an open shame. Knowing this, he did not keep his vision to himself, and thus conceal from hopeful and enthusiastic disciples the inevitable in the march of future events. On the contrary, he spoke freely to

them about things which must come to pass. But their eyes were dim and their minds were dull, and only partially and imperfectly could they catch his view. Evidence that his vision was sweeping the field for a long time ahead is seen in the predictions which accompanied his instructions as he sent his messengers forth, not only to immediate tasks but also for so long a service as to make disciples of all the nations. He was beholding continents and thinking in centuries. Earthly spaces were vast and earthly journeys long in those years. Ages must pass before men's inventions would begin to annihilate space and shorten time. One generation must go and another generation come in long procession ere half the countries of the world would be reached, yet he was viewing the progress of the gospel of the Kingdom, unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Scribes, instructed unto the kingdom of heaven according to ideas prevalent in the present age, may warn trustful souls not to assume too much on the basis of Christ's prediction concerning the world-wide vicissitudes of his gospel, and may speak of the incarnate Lord somewhat in the following fashion: "Jesus was a man of his time. He was subject to the limitations of human knowledge in his own

age. He had recently come from the narrow confines of a carpenter shop in a small village among the hills. Could any such wonderful knowledge of future movements throughout the world come out of Nazareth? How could the peasant from Nazareth know the geography of the whole round earth, or realize how many generations must pass before his gospel could be preached in every land?" Sayings of this kind all remind us that we should not forget the Christ's experience called the *kenosis*. Doubtless it is well for us to remember how Paul wrote to the saints in Philippi that Christ Jesus, "existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." Nevertheless, accepting this as the statement of a wholesome and important truth, it will be profitable to bear in mind that Jesus must have known quite as well as Paul could know to what extent he had emptied himself of power, knowledge, or any other possession of equality with God. Instructors of the people who decline to accept a doctrine on the authority of a few isolated proof texts should be careful lest they overwork the single statement that the Son did not know the day and hour of the occurrence of a specified event cer-

tain to take place in the future of the kingdom of heaven. It would be a sad mistake, if not something worse than a mistake, to discount many statements of things which he did know by drawing conclusions from the single statement that one thing he did not know. According to his own statements, he knew the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—vast regions of those mysteries at least. He knew the mind and heart of man. He knew the destiny of the people of all the nations. He knew the Father as no one but the Son could know the Father. He had positive knowledge of God and Satan, angels and demons, good and evil. He knew heaven, the vast apartments of the Father's home, the social conditions in those regions, how angels lived, what occasioned joy in their presence. If he did not know all this, he was either dreadfully mistaken or dreadfully mendacious, for he spoke as an authority on all these matters. Who shall say that the One who saw and knew all that, could not behold the needs and ways of tribes in the remote regions of the eastern hemisphere including the isles of the sea, and even as far away as the Americas? Who shall say that he could not behold the inevitable march of events down the highways of time, and the operations of the kingdom of God in

the world field all the way from the beginning of seedtime to the end of harvest? To Nicodemus he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen." Here is one who moves constantly in an atmosphere of awareness of future events, and reads many things in that future as readily as he reads from the book of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth.

It is interesting to note some things which he does not mention as seen by him as future developments in the world field. They are among things previously seen and foretold by others in prophetic vision. There was a prophet of the olden time who had glorious visions of heavenly places and earthly places, some of whose words Jesus quoted as being fulfilled in himself. In one of his raptures the prophet beholds a marvelous state of things somewhere in the future. He sees wolves dwelling with lambs, all happy; leopards lying down with kids, all sleeping peacefully; little children managing teams of calves and young lions hitched together, all enjoying the performance; cows and bears feeding in the same pasture, all eating and none being eaten; babes, both weaned and unweaned, playing in health and security among reptiles once poi-

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sonous; nothing hurting, nothing destroying, because the knowledge of Jehovah fills the earth as the waters cover the sea.

If Jesus ever spoke of seeing such things in the growth and development of life in the world field the record of those words has not come down to us. Not that he contradicted the prophets. That such peaceful conditions as they pictured will prevail some time, somewhere, he did not deny or question. Indeed, in the confidences of the upper room, and occasionally elsewhere, there are indications that he was looking upon even more excellent glory very far off, but he did not include those farthest visions in the scope of his prediction of events and conditions in the world field. Wolves he saw, but although some wore sheep's clothing, all were ravening beasts. Serpents he saw, but they were venomous reptiles. He beheld his sheep going forth among wolves, but he did not speak of them as establishing a happy brotherhood of commingled flock and pack. The wolves were tearing and killing the sheep and scattering the flock. He saw vipers among the children of the Kingdom, but he did not represent them as entertaining his little ones with innocent amusements. He did see the reptiles engaged in tormenting believers even unto death.

Before him as he gazes into the future is this vision of wheat and tares, growing together, on and on. He has put the vision before us both in the bluntness of literal statement and in a variety of imagery. There they are in the field as the years go by. Faithful souls profitable to the Kingdom, and wicked and slothful souls a nuisance to the Kingdom. Lives like good trees that cannot bring forth evil fruit, and lives like corrupt trees that cannot bring forth good fruit. Hearts open to the mysteries of the Kingdom and hearts stubbornly closed against the truth. Good men out of good treasure in the heart bringing forth good, and evil men out of evil treasure in the heart bringing forth evil. Plodders who do much for the Kingdom and say little about it, and boasters who profess piety and power but dodge real service rendered according to the will of God. Helpers of the least of Christ's brethren in their need, and neglecters of his brethren though they languish and die. Little ones who believe on him, and big ones who cause the little ones to stumble. Glad receivers of his messengers and message, and hostile rejecters of his messengers. Lovers of both him and his Father, and haters of him and his Father.

With this vision ever before him he sees it

inevitable that the presence of antagonistic forces of good and evil will perpetuate division, separating heart from heart, forbidding union in the bonds of spiritual comradeship and brotherhood, and going so far as to alienate friends and rupture families. True, he beholds and promises peace for his own even in such conditions, but it is peace of his kind, peace in tribulation, peace in the presence of enemies who would kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, peace in standing firm as granite hills against the powers of hell, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Our Lord plainly states that wheat and tares will grow together until the harvest. He does not tell us whether the tares will grow and multiply faster than the wheat, or the wheat faster than the tares. So, notwithstanding his explanation of the parable, an explanation explicit and unmistakable in respect to the points which it includes, it is claimed that he leaves unsettled the question of the constant betterment or the continuous deterioration of the human world. No little power has been applied and considerable heat has been generated in the discussion of that question. Upon the whole, what is the effect upon the world of the Kingdom in the world? Is the world growing better or worse? The question may be put in

this way: Are not the children of the Kingdom multiplying in number, growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, according to apostolic statements, and are they not thus increasing in power for good; and does not all this purify the life of the world, strengthen it in righteousness, and thus constantly make it a better world? Or the question may be put in some such way as this: Is not iniquity being multiplied and the love of many waxing cold, are not men holding a form of godliness who have denied the power thereof, are not scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Are not false teachers privily bringing in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them? Are not evil men and impostors waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived, according to apostolic statements, and is not all this coming to pass to such an extent as to impair the life of the world at large, and continuously to make it a worse world? Some are confident that it is growing better, others that it is getting worse, while yet others think that in some respects it is becoming better and in other respects worse, and that in weighing one set of conditions against its opposite there is no telling which preponderates. That such differ-

ences of opinion should exist is not strange, for the facts involved in determining the truth of the matter are multitudinous and appear in great variety of guise.

"What went ye out to see?" was a question put to people living round about Jordan who had been out to the ministry of a man preaching in the wilderness. There was nothing secretive in the preacher's personality, nothing vague or uncertain in his message. He rebuked sin, denounced sinners, demanded repentance, and preached a kingdom of heaven at hand and wrath to come. Pharisees and lawyers saw in him a man possessed by a devil. One, Jesus, who came down from Nazareth to be baptized in the Jordan by this preacher, saw in him a prophet and more than a prophet. Many of the people likewise saw in John a prophet, and heard the voice of a prophet crying in the wilderness, as foretold by Isaiah. Probably what different individuals saw in the person and ministry of the man clothed in camel's hair depended largely upon what they went out to see. .Certainly, it is so with men in these days. Oftentimes, if we know what the man or the woman went out to see in church, politics, or some other field of social endeavor, it is hardly necessary to wait for the report of what was seen. When one goes

forth among the churches, does he see progress in Christlike service or pettiness, sectarian bigotry, hypocrisy, reaction, and failure? When one goes out to investigate conditions in a political party, does he see loyalty to high ideals, faithful stewardship, and wise management, all promising to make the country a garden of the Lord; or does he find appalling corruption, a riot of dishonesty and incompetence, all threatening the nation with degradation and disaster? When one observes the throngs of immigrants coming to our shores, does he behold hopeful human material for strengthening the nation's life, or "scum o' the earth"? When one looks upon the entire field of human conditions throughout the world, does he see betterment or deterioration? Why, in each case he is likely to see what he went out to see. In sizing up a situation where conditions are diverse and complex it is so easy to see what one seeks to see.

However, the present inquiry is not concerned primarily, if at all, with the history of wheat and tares in the world field, nor with world conditions at the present time, nor with the opinions and theories of trained men or babes, wise men or fools, about those conditions, but with the picture of the field as it existed in the mind of Jesus and appeared in

his teaching. We are not asking what Peter, Paul, and other apostles saw, nor what men of our time see, or think they see, as they observe the trend of moral and religious movements. The question to which we seek the answer just now is simply this: What did our Lord teach about the future of good and evil in the world?

It has been thought that the mind of the Master concerning world betterment is pretty clearly set forth in a parable which appears to have been spoken to the multitude soon after the parable of the tares, and before his explanation of it to his disciples. Between that parable and its explanation we read, "Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened." Since Jesus gave no explanation of this parable it is left for men to interpret. According to one interpretation, it pictures a world constantly being changed into a better world by the leaven of gospel truth and the Holy Spirit's influence. Each to-day greets a better world than the world of yesterday morning. This pervasive improvement will continue until every nation will have become a righteous nation and a good neighbor to every other nation, world-wide society will be

a world-wide brotherhood, every city will be a holy city, having come down out of heaven from God and being in no wise polluted by the presence of "anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie," and until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

Against this interpretation it is objected that elsewhere leaven is always a corrupting influence in the thought and symbolism of Jesus and the Hebrew people. Accordingly, in harmony with this view of leaven as a symbol of corruption, the parable of the leaven hid in the meal is interpreted as teaching that pernicious influences are to be ceaselessly at work demoralizing the fabric of human society, or, using the imagery of the previous parable, that the tares will more and more disfigure and damage the field, that false prophets and teachers under the leadership of Satan largely disguised as an angel of light, will continue to prosecute their baneful operations, and the world as a whole will get worse and worse, until heroic measures must be taken by the Lord of the Kingdom to clear the field. If Jesus had something like this in mind, we might almost think of him as warning some interpreters of our own time in the words, "How is it that ye do not perceive that I

spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Whatever the merit of the foregoing interpretation, the fact that leaven was often used as the symbol of a corrupting influence can hardly be regarded as an insuperable objection to its use by the Master to illustrate the progressive action of divine power in human affairs, since he could find, and at times did find and use, something helpfully suggestive in the action of a person or thing mostly bad, the parables of the unjust steward and the unjust judge being instances. The fatal objection to the first mentioned interpretation of the parable of the leaven in the meal is that it would make the parable squarely contradict the teaching of the parable of the tares as explained by our Lord in words immediately following the parable of the leaven. Not only so but it would also contradict other statements of the future course and issues of good and evil in the world, repeatedly and emphatically made. In the predictions of Jesus evil is never thus exterminated, but is always cast out in another way.

Recognizing such facts there is an interpretation which does not regard the parable of the leaven as teaching the presence of a trans-

forming power sufficient to bring to pass a universal and complete regeneration of individuals and society, but as affirming the operation of an ameliorating influence, reducing the number of tares in proportion to the wheat, and improving the nature of the tares. While they are not being transformed into wheat, they are becoming more like wheat, possibly developing spiritual vitamines. Thus upon the whole the world is becoming a better world; still bad in many respects, but getting better.

There is yet another interpretation which accepts the parable of the leaven as illustrating the progress of the kingdom of God in the life of the individual. The disciple is growing in grace. His vision of truth is being broadened and clarified. His spiritual power is being increased. His whole nature is being transformed, vitalized, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because he has faith as a grain of mustard seed, a growing and strengthening faith, he is going forward to the point where he will be able to remove mountains. Thus, whether the world is growing better or worse, the child of the Kingdom is becoming a better child from day to day.

This diversity of interpretation makes it appear that leaven may represent one of the mysteries, either of the kingdom of heaven or

of the kingdom of Satan. Be it so, there is relief in considering that yeast unexplained is a smaller thing, and undoubtedly a less important thing, than a world explained. However the domestic picture of the bread-maker may be interpreted, this one thing is certain: both wheat and tares are now in the world field for better or for worse. Another thing is certain: Jesus clearly saw, and explicitly predicted, that both wheat and tares would stay in the field, unto some impending consummation in future time. The world of which he speaks is never a good world before that consummation. Looking through future developments in the field where wheat and tares are growing together, he sees a "harvest." It is not too much to say that in the teaching of our Lord from beginning to end the sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the evil one are in the world "until the harvest."

THE LORD OF THE FIELD

CHAPTER X

AS SON

When Philip said to his friend Nathanael, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," Nathanael answered, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said, "Come and see." He went, he saw, he heard, and exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art King of Israel."

Nathanael was early with his confession. Was he the first to greet Jesus with the glad exclamation, "Thou art the Son of God"? This must have been many months before Jesus in Cæsarea Philippi put to his disciples the question, "Who say ye that I am?" and Peter, as spokesman for the twelve, answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Things unwritten here we should like to know. Did Jesus send Philip after Nathanael? What is the significance of Christ's allusion to the tarrying of Nathanael under a fig tree? Was he there keeping tryst with the Father? Was he pleading there for some new light to dawn upon his spirit? Was he pledging acceptance of any revelation which

might come to him? Answer such questions as we may, this is clear; Nathanael recognized the fact that Jesus of Nazareth was in the field to do a mighty work as the Son of God. Jesus was not much to him before the recognition of that fact. Just a village carpenter from the hills. Nor is Jesus much of a Saviour and Lord to any person whose soul does not cry out, "Thou art the Son of God." Where is there any record of a speedier passage from spiritual blindness to spiritual discernment? Nathanael traveled a long way in a short time in going from that fig tree to the spot where Jesus awaited him. How far it was in furlongs and cubits we do not know. Nor how far in minutes and seconds. But in the realm of thought and faith it was a long path. It was over the same path that Paul traced in his vision of the humiliation of Christ, only Nathanael followed the path in the opposite direction. His thought went all the way from Nazareth to the dwelling-place of the high and holy One who inhabiteth eternity; from the status of this young Nazarene as the son of Joseph, according to Philip's statement, to his status as the Son of God; from a place among common folks and despised folks in the lowly haunts of earth to a place of kingly glory with the Eternal in the heights of heaven.

The passage from the fogs of doubt and unbelief to the sunlight of faith in the Son of God may not be made so speedily in these days. We are able to travel earth, sea, and air far more swiftly than those ancients, but in reaching heavenly places in Christ Jesus we often move at a sluggish pace. Nevertheless, one cannot tarry long among the words of Jesus without being obliged to reckon in some fashion with the idea of his divine Sonship. In preceding pages we have had it thrust upon us in various aspects again and again. Both because it cannot be avoided and because it meant so much to his ministry, and in order to get the clearest possible understanding of his view of his mission, it behooves us to give particular attention to his view of his Sonship.

We do not forget that in the parable which pictures his program in the earthly field Jesus says that "the Son of man" is the sower of the good seed. Nor can any reader of his sayings fail to note that it was his custom to speak of himself in those words. No fewer than eighty-two times the expression occurs in the four Gospels. Eighty times Jesus applies the title to himself, and in the other two cases it is evident that other persons using it are referring to his use of it in a previous statement. He

seems to have had a fondness for the title and to have rejoiced in it. As if it meant to him that in him the Son of God had humbled himself to human relationships, and in him sons of men were exalted to divine relationships. Its frequent use has furnished a savory morsel for some students of Scripture, and has been an interesting albeit rather perplexing problem to others. Daniel, the seer whose visions have captivated gazers into the future for two thousand years, writes that in a dream and visions of his head upon his bed he saw, and "behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." There can be no doubt that Jesus and his disciples, and most of the people for that matter, were interested to some extent in the book of Daniel. In a confidential talk with the twelve the Master mentions the "abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet" as something familiar to them, and they must have known what was written of

the Son of man in that prophetic book. Whatever the origin of the expression, it appears to have become to the multitude a designation of the Messiah, and to have suggested to them the appearing of One who comes with the authority of the Lord from heaven. Jesus uses the title in a way to indicate that no other son of man is just such a son of man as he. It is not only as *A* son of man but as *The* Son of man, differing from every other son of man, that he comes to teach, to heal, and to save. Evidently, the people who were looking for the Messiah understood him to mean no less than that. No sooner had Nathanael declared that Jesus was the Son of God than Jesus "answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." In a minute of conversation Jesus is both the Son of God and the Son of man. The same thing occurs in a striking way in the examination of Jesus before the Jewish authorities. The high priest asks him, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus answers, "I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting

at the right hand of Power." This can be none other than *the* Son of man above all other sons of men, and unlike every one of them in his nature and office. Ezekiel, the prophet, was conspicuous among the godly sons of men in his time, so much so that Jehovah, in giving him some message for the people was wont to address him in the words, "Thou, son of man." But the prophet was no such son either of God or of man as this Jesus. Ezekiel never presumed to deliver a divine message on his own authority. His way was to say to the people, "Thus and thus saith the Lord Jehovah." Other prophets likewise are very bold. They are sure that they have the word of the Lord. They say so. Great Isaiah says, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity." But this Jesus of Nazareth and of Heaven says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." Not only on the authority of another high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity does he speak, but also on his own authority. As if there were no other authority so high on earth and no higher authority in heaven. Thus not only does he speak as One who is infinitely greater than a prophet, but also is infinitely greater than any son of the Kingdom. As Sower and Source of the good seed which brings forth sons of the Kingdom,

he speaks as the Lord of the field and the Head of the Kingdom.

Since the filial mind cannot be fully known apart from its idea of the fatherly mind, we must know something of what Jesus thinks of his Father and of that Father's Fatherhood if we would know clearly what he thinks of his own Sonship. In his statement recorded by Matthew where he declares that no one knows "the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him," he must be speaking of no less a revelation than revealing God as Father. Men may know God, or think they know him, as Creator, Sovereign, Force, Cause, the Absolute, and not know him as Father. It is as true in the United States to-day as it was in Galilee on that elder day that the only way to get the truth about the Fatherhood of God is to learn it through Jesus Christ. It is as true in our own time as it was in that time that wise and understanding persons will have woefully deficient and erroneous views of the Father and his Fatherhood unless they come unto the Son and learn of him. And if the babes of our age, the unschooled, the simple-minded, will take his yoke upon them and learn of him in meekness and lowliness of heart, they will know the Father in a way which will bring rest unto their souls.

The conception of an ideal fatherhood varies as it is affected by various influences, such as racial characteristics and changing conditions in human life, from age to age. It is one thing to the American and a somewhat different thing to the Chinese. It is modified by the time spirit of each succeeding age. It was not quite the same in the meditations of the pilgrim father, plodding through the woods on horseback, that it is to the scurrying thought of the twentieth-century New Englander sweeping past broad fields of growing onions and tobacco in his seven-passenger sedan. It is affected by influences so numerous and diverse that presumably it is not quite the same to the thought of any two persons in any age.

There is a captivating plausibility in assuming that Christ's idea of the divine Fatherhood must be in harmony with our own idea of what the Fatherhood of God should be; that there could have been nothing in his idea to contradict our ideal, certainly nothing less good than our ideal. As Whittier expressed it when he wrote concerning the Father in his poem on "The Eternal Goodness:"

> " . . . Nothing can be good in Him
> Which evil is in me."

Certainly not, if I am an infallible judge of

good and evil, and thus am unerringly guided by an infallible conscience. But in the same poem it is written:

> "I dare not fix with mete and bound
> The love and power of God."

And if not his love and power, shall human judgment fix the mete and bound of his righteousness? The spirit of the Quaker poet was Christlike in its charity for human brothers, and trust in the heavenly Father, and his ethical standards were high, even as tested by the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, but in a universe where "none is good save one, even God," there is peril in accepting the pronouncements of any single human conscience or of the collective human conscience, whatever that may be, as adequate to gauge the righteousness of God, the Holy Father. When a prophet of olden time pronounced a woe "unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" such persons appear to have been quite numerous. One has only to scan the printed matter scattered among the nations in profusion more vast than the leaves from the tree of life for the healing of the nations to be convinced that the tribe of proponents of

inverted moralities is not yet extinct. There are persons, sometimes called pessimists, who think that the numbers of the tribe have increased. However that may be, the time has not yet arrived for the righteousness of God and the quality of his Fatherhood to be interpreted and determined by the standards of righteousness and the ideals of fatherhood of any human crowd or coterie. Where, then, shall we go for perfect standards of fatherhood if not to the teaching of that Son of God who declares that he came into the world to bear witness unto the truth, and assures us that if we abide in his word, we shall know the truth? And since the mind of the Master was not provincial but was kingdom-wide in the range of its activities, it cannot be learned upon any subject of divine proportions by provincial investigation. The pursuit of his thought about the Father leads out to the grazing grounds of flocks, up to the nesting places of birds, into the homes of the people, unto the mansions of the Father's house, as far as the utmost bounds of the kingdom of God, and even into regions of darkness and sorrow outside the Kingdom.

Hence in order to grasp Christ's idea of his own Sonship we need to follow as best we may the full sweep of his teaching concerning the

Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man, and so far as possible get his view of both the divine and the human side of those relationships. Great things in the realm either of matter or of spirit must be viewed from more than one point if they are to be seen and known as they really are. Jesus spoke of the relations between God, the Father, and his children, both as he saw them, from various viewpoints in the earthly field, and as he viewed them on the Godward side.

We hear him speak of himself as being the Son of God, and of others as being sons of the Father, but never of himself as being just like other sons in his relation to the Father and in the quality of his Sonship. He appears to be conscious of sustaining such relations to the Father as others do not and cannot; or if they can and do, he never intimates it. The intimations are all the other way. "The good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom." But the Sower differs from a stalk of growing grain. He is not a son of the Kingdom. Because of another Sonship he cannot be. In the high prerogatives of his Sonship the Sower is not to be classified with the sons who are the products of the sowing. He taught his disciples to say "Our Father," but he never addressed God in that way. Often he prayed

in their presence and in their behalf, and in the company of other friends whom he loved, as when he lifted up eyes and voice to heaven by the tomb of Lazarus, but in those petitions the words, "Our Father," were not on his lips. "After this manner pray *ye*,"[1] he said, but after that manner *he* did not pray. Why not? There must have been a reason rooted in the very nature of God's Fatherhood and Christ's Sonship. Had it been otherwise, there were occasions on which it would seem to us to have been the natural thing, and well-nigh inevitable, for him to have been prompted by the impulse of a loving heart to say, "Our Father." To cite a single instance, in that scene with Mary in the garden he said to her, "I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." He was not given to a needless multiplication of words. In this message he called the disciples his brethren. Why, then, did he not bid Mary to say unto them, "I ascend unto our Father and our God"? If he thought of himself as standing in a certain relation to the Father and of them as standing in a radically different relation, and thus of his Sonship as differing in certain

[1] Italics the author's.

essential characteristics from their sonship, that consciousness of the disparity of the Infinite would account for his use of terms in sending his message. The same discrimination, everywhere maintained in his use of the expressions "my Father" and "your Father," harmonizes with the idea of his unique Sonship.

That he laid claim to such sonship is made evident by the wrath of his enemies, and thus does the wrath of man praise this Son of God. The Jews of his time enjoyed a comfortable certainty that they had one Father, even God. They did not hesitate to say so. But when at his trial before the Jewish authorities the high priest, who was supposed to be nearer the eternal Father than any other man in the nation, stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" and he answered, "I am," that was the assumption of such godlike exaltation, and of Sonship so much greater and more divine than the sonship of any high priest in Aaron's line, that Priest Caiaphas rent his clothes in horror, and cried, "What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?" And they all condemned him to be worthy of death. Unquestionably, those Jewish leaders were fully aware of the nature of the Master's claims for himself.

Their opinions of what manner of person the Christ should be were impregnably fixed. They had a vision of their own. They saw no reason to undo it for a roving friend of publicans and sinners. Doubtless there have been religious leaders in later ages who have denied the Sonship of Christ, as he bore witness to it, because it did not conform to their ideas of what the Son of God, having become flesh and dwelling among men, must be.

Many are the explicit declarations in which Jesus sets forth his relations to the Father. He affirms that he has come to do the works of God. Not merely *godlike* works but *God-wrought* works. It is the Sabbath on the occasion of a great feast of the Jews. Visitors swarm the streets of Jerusalem. Jesus heals an impotent man who has been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. The Jews denounce him for breaking the fourth commandment by doing such a work on the Sabbath day. His reply to them is, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." They are angry and seek the more to kill him because he not only breaks the Sabbath but also calls "God his own Father, making himself equal with God." He does not disavow the equality, but asserts for himself union with the Father of a kind which prevents him from doing any-

thing independently of the Father, and makes him a partaker in all the works of the Father. He says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth." Then he proceeds to make stupendous claims for himself, appealing to his works in support of the claims in these words, "The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." But did not other sons of God among the followers of Jesus do such works? No, not as he did them. Mighty works were done through them, not in their name but in his name, not by their power but by his power, as they themselves avow. When a Paul goes forth in a ministry of power he declares, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." When a Peter officiates at the healing of a man palsied for eight years he says, "Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise." This Jesus is the only Son of God who has life-giving power in himself. How has it come to pass that he has such power? Hear him saying just before his invitation to all laborers and burden-bearers to come unto

him for rest, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father." Then go on to Jerusalem, join the little band in the upper room, and hear him aver, "All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine." Is not the secret out? Taking his words at their full value, is he affirming less than partnership with his Father in the ownership of the universe? Certainly, he regards himself as the active partner of his Father in all the work of the world field. This partnership is so complete that he can say that the Father "hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

We do not forget that on one occasion, in speaking to the twelve of going to the Father, he said, "The Father is greater than I."—as if it were necessary to remind them of the fact—a statement in itself no less than a naive recognition of a unique relation to God. Had it not been for his frequent reference to the fact of his unique Sonship, and the acceptance of that fact by his disciples, there would have been no occasion for such a statement. Where was ever another human being who could have solemnly informed his fellows that God was greater than he without making himself supremely ridiculous? But the question arises, How much greater than him-

self does the Son think his Father to be?—a question to which Jesus has given us no categorical answer. Certain words and acts rule out the necessity for such an answer. Not enough greater to prevent perfect understanding between Father and Son, and undisturbed harmony in purpose and act. Not enough greater to prevent the Son from saying to hostile men, at the risk of being stoned for the utterance, "I and the Father are one," and on another occasion, "I am in the Father and the Father in me." Evidently, it is his thought that anything which the Father can do as Life-giver, either in this world or in any other world, the Son can do also. So completely are they one that the Son asserts, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and again, standing in the throng on a feast day, cries, "He that believeth on me believeth, not on me, but on him that sent me." In peculiar phrase he speaks of Father and Son as sharing each other's glory. In his farewell words to his disciples he assures them that the Son is to be glorified, and that God will be glorified in him. And at the very last, just before going out to his death, he prays, "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." In such utterances he makes clear as sunlight

his thought that the Father has no glory which is not the glory of the Son, and that the Son can have no glory which is not the glory of the Father.

Thus that the Christ came to reveal the Father, and to set forth the nature and scope of the divine Fatherhood, he has made clear in his teaching. That he also came to bring to men a revelation of the Son of God, and of the nature, scope, and power of divine Sonship, he has made equally clear. Repeatedly it has been written and spoken that in the person of Christ the life of God was being lived in human relations. Apostles without number, in continuous line from the days of Paul to the date of the latest illuminator of Pauline theology, have been declaring that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. They have said it in different terms and have understood it in various ways, but they have always meant at least as much as this—that this man Jesus somehow and in some measure lived the life of God in this human world. Doubtless Jesus was saying it in much of his teaching cited in this chapter. Certainly he was saying another thing in that teaching, and saying it plainly and with emphasis. Namely, that he was living the life of the *Son of God* in human relations;

that from the beginning to the end of his earthly pilgrimage, without the slightest deviation or adulteration, his life in the flesh was the full-orbed life of the Son of God. A world astray from the Father's house and estranged from filial life was in sore need of that kind of revelation. It may be more important for persons who would be sons of the Kingdom to get a revelation of divine Sonship than of divine Fatherhood. God may be trusted to take care of his Fatherhood if we will give proper attention to our sonship. It is ever a sad inversion of religious values in the search for truth for one to become a specialist in the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God and yet remain a tyro in the doctrine and practice of the sonship of man. Until the prodigal quits the life of a profligate and begins to live the life of a son, it matters little to him that there is in some far country one whose heart yearns to be to him a father. It is safe to assume that it was not by mere accident in the succession of ideas that Jesus in his teaching on the mount first told his disciples what they must do in order that they might be sons of their Father who is in heaven, and afterward told them what God would do for them as their Father. It was entirely appropriate that instruction regarding filial living should

precede information concerning Fatherly care. Since the relations of fatherhood and sonship are reciprocal, fatherhood cannot be complete until sonship is adequate.

Now are the children of the Kingdom the children of God. Is it yet made manifest what they shall be? When the Christ shall appear, in harvest time, and they shall see him even as he is, will they be like him? If so, how much like him will they be? That they cannot be like him in the eternity and the limitless plenitude of his divine Sonship is made evident in his words. Will they be like him in such degree or quality as now they are not and cannot be? In his teaching regarding the harvest we may find light upon these questions.

CHAPTER XI

AS KING

THERE was hope in Israel in the days of the coming of the Son of God. And more than hope. The fruitage from the sowing of the prophetic word was almost in sight. Expectation was abroad in the land, and had penetrated other lands touched by Hebrew migrations. In Jerusalem was Simeon, to whom it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ, looking for and expecting the consolation of Israel. There was Anna, the prophetess, who departed not from the Temple but served God with fastings and prayers night and day, expecting to see a Babe who in his day would bring redemption to the people. And there were other Simeons and Annas on the hills of Judæa and by the waters of Galilee, looking, listening, expecting to see a Person whose power would be felt in all lands and to hear a voice that would rouse all peoples. That little world on the strip of land between the Syrian desert and the Mediterranean Sea, along the great thoroughfares between the kingdoms of western Asia and

Egypt, was everywhere an expectant world. And the healthful contagion of a glad expectation was so penetrative and far-reaching that it brought the Magi to Jerusalem from afar. One significant thing in the character and attitude of those prophetic souls who were expecting God to visit and redeem his people was the fact that their expectations were high born—throbbing in spirits both forward looking and backward looking, emerging from a hallowed past enshrined in both history and tradition, and expanding into a more glorious future. In this connection it is well to note that if backward looking does not precede forward looking, the forward look is not likely to see much worth looking at. Moreover, those notable expecters of a new era in human affairs were upward looking men and women. Heavenly visions inspired and focused their expectations. It appears to have been the belief of the true prophets of ancient time that in order to read the future aright in the progress of the kingdom of heaven through earthly events one must look in at least three different directions, backward, forward, and upward. Wise men from the East could count it all joy to make a long journey for the fulfillment of an expectation because doubtless they had looked backward with some degree of spiritual insight into

things spoken and written by prophets of former ages, probably had looked forward upon a better reign of righteousness than the nations had yet known, and certainly had looked upward where they saw a new star in the sky. And it seems to have been chiefly from the star that they received guidance, if not inspiration. Had they not seen that star and been guided by it, would they have set out in the direction of the little town of Bethlehem? Would they not have been more likely to journey toward Athens or Rome to find a Babe born king of a more distinguished people than the Jews?

And what manner of man or superman was expected in those days? The Magi came to Jerusalem inquiring: "Where is he that is born King . . . ? For we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him." They saw the star of a King. They came to worship a King. And when Herod heard it he was troubled because the prophets of Israel had foretold the coming of a King. Herod had abundant reason for apprehension. Although a king in title, and with certain limitations a king in fact, and called "The great," he occupied a throne subject to the will and favor of Augustus, and thus, under the sway of the emperor, was little greater than a kinglet. In those

last weeks of his reign he must have feared that his doom was at hand. He knew that he was not the King of prophetic expectation. The people knew it too, and were glad of it. They were looking for the day when they should be delivered from the rule of both Herod and Cæsar, when Israel should come to its own in a kingdom and with a king of its own, when their kingdom should be tributary to no other kingdom, and their king should be subject to the will of no other king but God. It is true that priests could discount, or even disavow, that expectation when they thought that such a course might serve their purpose. Years later, after Herod had died and his son Archelaus had been deposed by the emperor, when Jesus was being tried before Pilate, an official of the empire, and Pilate asked the accusers, "Shall I crucify your king?" the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar." That declaration was made as a political expedient to get rid of One whom they regarded as an undesirable candidate. Not that they wanted no king but Cæsar, not that they were looking for no king but Cæsar, not that they hated Cæsar less, but that they hated Jesus more. Only a few days before the arrest of Jesus, as he was drawing nigh to Jerusalem, a multitude of disciples

greeted him with shouts of rejoicing and praise, saying, "Blessed *is* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." Whether people desired that Jesus be crucified or crowned, they expected the coming of the King.

Yet, after all, the question which chiefly concerns us in this chapter is not what was in the mind of Magi, government officials, priests, or aged and devout saints outside the priestly office, concerning the promised King, but what was in the mind of Jesus concerning that King? When and how did the spirit of the Babe of Bethlehem come to his own? When and how did he reach the consciousness that he was, or was to be, the King? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; we cannot penetrate the deepest secrets in the development of his personality. We do know that the development of this Child of God was in a human atmosphere of expectation. When the decree of Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled sent Joseph and Mary over the long road from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the way was thronged with travelers set in motion by the command of the man who ruled the world from the city of the seven hills. As the people toiled along the rugged paths of Palestine they would have been less than Hebrew, and even

less than human, had they not engaged in vigorous discussion of present exactions and of the hope of a rule better for Israel. Probably Joseph listened, certainly he dreamed. Like the ancient Joseph, he was a notable dreamer, only there was a notable difference in the dreaming of the two Josephs. The other Joseph dreamed about himself and his own future power and glory. This Joseph dreamed about the care and prospects of Another, and that other the Babe born to Mary, his wife, in a stable at Bethlehem. He accepted his dreams as revelations and warnings from God. Like Paul, he was not disobedient to his visions, but acted upon them with unhesitating promptitude. In view of all the visions and hovering portents connected with the birth of Jesus, and of the rare gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh brought by distinguished and star-guided strangers from afar, such a dreamer as Joseph could hardly have been so stolid as to fail in connecting the child Jesus with the regal expectation of his people. Mary appears to have been more accessible to heavenly influences than her husband. When the angel of Jehovah had a message for her he did not need to seek her in dreamland. He could speak with her face to face. Her spirit was of the quality to commune with heaven's mes-

sengers and receive divinest messages when she was most awake, and also the kind of spirit to be inspired and transfigured by them. According to the record, she kept the sayings of angels, Magi, shepherds, and saints of the Temple, pondering all these things in her heart. It was a full heart that went back to Nazareth from Bethlehem by the way of Egypt. It was an overflowing heart that poured its blessedness into the Nazareth home. God had set eternity in that heart. Even if the wondrous things pondered in the heart of that mother never passed her lips in the hearing of her Son, the glorious expectations which they inspired and fostered could not have been so hidden there as to prevent them from glowing in her eyes, modulating the tones of her voice, making their presence felt in her counsels to her child, and thus touching both his conscious and sub-conscious life with power. After all the hallowing experiences attending the birth and infancy of Jesus the home at Nazareth must have been profoundly influenced by the expectation of the appearing of the King, and of an important place for this Child in that appearing. May we not detect a result of those influences in the first recorded utterance of our Lord? A Boy, lost for three days, was found in the Temple sitting

in the midst of the theologians, hearing them and asking them questions, amazing all who heard him by his understanding and answers. When his mother gently chided him for causing them sorrow, he put two questions in defense of his conduct: "How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Strange that they should not have thought at the moment of discovering his absence from the company of kinsfolk that this Boy, reared in their home, was likely to be found in the house of his Father, engaged in his Father's business. Did they not know that the King's business required early attention? In view of many things said of him and by him in the years of his maturity, it appears probable that on that day in the Temple he was already aware of sustaining a peculiar relation to the King Eternal, and of being destined to occupy a place of power in his Father's earthly affairs. Luke writes that he came back to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary, but quite significantly adds that he was subject unto them—as if it were a remarkable thing for this Lad, who was waiting for the great day to arrive when all the children of the kingdom of heaven could be subject unto him, to be subject to anybody, even in the days of his youth; as if the world needed to be told

that this scion of royalty divine would permit himself to be subject to such lowly persons as the carpenter and his wife in Nazareth.

Here was a Youth who was bound to get out from shop and cottage into some temple where he could commune with a greater than the doctors of the law in the city of the great King. We may believe that his custom in manhood of going up into the mountains at night to pray was rooted in the prayers of childhood at his mother's knee, and established in the habits of his youth. In imagination one can see the Lad out among the hills of Nazareth, looking up into the shining eyes of the Syrian stars and beyond them into the more excellent glory out of which the voice of the Father was wont to speak, communing with kingly thoughts and challenging the kingly expectations throbbing unbidden in his soul.

It may be thought that the foregoing views pass beyond the boundaries of interpretation into the realm of conjecture based upon rather unsubstantial foundations. Be it so, Jesus has not left his claim to kingly authority in the region of conjecture. He began his preaching with the call, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Nothing could be more certain than that he did not mean by that "the democracy" of heaven is at hand. "Govern-

ment of the people, by the people, and for the people" was not the government of the kingdom of heaven as he understood it and set it forth. A government in which every person is governed and every person is a governor may be captivating as a theory, and might result in an ideal social order, if only it would work. It is at least an open question if any such government can be made to work until every person is absolutely governed by the righteous God. Then maybe no human government will be needed. Assuredly, Jesus never envisaged a kingdom of heaven under democratic rule. Some persons have thought it somewhat vaguely hinted in his teaching that something of the kind was once attempted by angels of some sort, but the attempt appears to have ended in dismal failure. As a political scheme in human operations democracy may yet prove to be a pronounced success, if it can be kept wholly subsidiary to and in harmony with the principles and powers of the kingdom of God. But in that kingdom Jesus recognized no authority as coming up from the people in any manner or degree. It ever came down from the King. He did not accept the voice of the people as the voice of God—not even the people of his own band. It will be remembered that when on a certain occasion their

spokesman expressed their opinion on a question of procedure in the kingdom, Jesus said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."[1] In that instance the Master heard in the voice of the people, and of quite decent people too, the voice of the devil. This One who refused to heed the voice of Satan, however uttered, insisted that the voice of God was to be heard in the voice of the Son of God, and that this voice was to be obeyed by the living and by the dead. Moreover, in all his preaching of the kingdom of heaven he spoke in the language of command. Nor was his relation to the Kingdom left by him as something to be inferred. He spoke of it as his kingdom, and of himself as King. He said to the twelve, "Ye call me, Teacher, and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am." If he was all that, no less than King was he. As he rode into Jerusalem he permitted a multitude of disciples to spread their garments in the way and hail him as King. He was fully aware, and was entirely willing that his followers should be fully aware, that he could not be the Son of God that he declared himself to be without being a royal personage of highest heavenly rank. He certainly implied, if he

[1] Authorized version.

did not explicitly declare, that he had not yet fully come to his own. His kingly authority was not being exercised as it will be in a coming day of power and glory. The King as Harvester will do many things which the King as Sower in the earthly fields of the Kingdom did not find it expedient to do. In this earthly field he was the Crown Prince. By and by he will rule from the throne.

Yet from that day of a rent heaven, a descending Spirit and a proclaiming voice he spoke with kingly authority. Not as a scribe interpreting law but as Lawgiver in his own right. His "Verily, verily, I say unto you" was the law of conduct for every son of the Kingdom. Upon every hearer of his word was the obligation to do that word, with certain penalty for failure to do it. In unmistakable terms he bade men forsake all, deny self, take up the cross, and follow him. As Lord of the Sabbath he dealt with the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. As authoritatively as Jehovah speaking amid the lightnings of Sinai he gave a new commandment. At his final departure he issued this order, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you." All things, not merely declared and expounded by him, but

commanded by him. There must be no evasion. There can be no alternative. Only by yielding to his authority can any person enter the kingdom of God and abide therein.

The question of kingship which plagued Herod at the birth of Jesus seems to have bothered Pilate at the crucifixion. After putting the question to his Prisoner and discussing it with him, he repeated it in the words, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king." Or according to another rendering, "Thou sayest it, because I am a king." In modern phrase, "You have said it." Pilate had voiced a truth to which Jesus had borne witness in word and deed. And when Pilate nailed to the cross the superscription written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," his foes objected, and wanted it changed to read, "He said I am King of the Jews." Nobody would dispute that. Everybody knew that he had spoken as the King. But Pilate answered them, "What I have written, I have written." Not by Pilate only was it written, but it has been so written by prophets and apostles, and so declared by the Christ himself, that Jesus of Nazareth must be accepted as King or rejected as dreamer and failure.

Nevertheless, though King indeed, he is not

like other kings. His kingdom is not of this world. It is of a higher order than worldly kingdoms. The glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the worldly is another. His servants do not fight with such weapons as are used in worldly wars. They win no victories by physical force. They conquer by yielding rather than by resisting. But in the end they conquer. What a strange kind of King is he! He is among his subjects as one who serves. The thirsty soul is invited to come to him and drink. Howbeit, the soul that thirsts for power and glory must drink the cup that he drinks and be baptized with the baptism that he is baptized with. Bitter has been that cup and bloody that baptism for many a loyal soul. In meekness and lowliness of heart he rules. But he rules. Every person in his kingdom must bear his yoke. This King is seen laying aside his outer garments, girding himself with a towel, and washing his disciples' feet. How can a King do that? Well, this is certain: he does not abdicate in doing it. He sets an example, and demands of the greatest among the sons of the kingdom that they do as he has done. Under his rule every one who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Clearly he was not the kind of king

that the people expected him to be and wanted him to be. Even his mother, woman of rare spiritual insight though she was, at one time seems to have thought that he was beside himself. When he perceived that a crowd of his beneficiaries were about to take him by force and make him a king of the worldly sort, he escaped from them into a mountain alone. At the beginning of his career the devil had tried to make him that kind of king. He would not permit himself to be such a king because he knew the kind of king a man-made king or a Satan-made king must be. He was willing to serve as menials serve in earthly kingdoms, but he would not come down from his God-made Kingship to hold sway over a worldly kingdom as a man-made king. It was not much of a crown or throne that his admirers sought to force upon him, but in his sight the throne of Cæsar was in the same class. Yet it was as true of him as it was of Cæsar in his realm, that in his kingdom his will must be done.

Well, then, is this kingdom a despotism? Had the house of Israel come out from Egyptian slavery to pass through a long period of bondage to foreign monarchs as captives in strange lands, and as vassals in their own land, into bondage yet more exacting? What does

Jesus say? Let his word and his testimony answer the question. He promised freedom to all who abide in his word. And he has made clear what it is to abide in that word. It is much more than to study, investigate, and meditate upon the message. It would be possible to spend a lifetime in critical study of every written word which proceeded out of his mouth and yet never abide in it. To abide is more than to understand it, more than to rejoice and revel in it, and, beyond that, even more than to assent to the truth of it. It may be possible to go thus far, and hail him, "Lord, Lord," with gushing emotion without really abiding. To abide is no less than to do the word, to keep his commandments, to yield the whole life in obedience. Without that, the words that he has spoken unto us never can be made spirit and life, vital air and food, unto the soul. While many things may be said, and truthfully said, about his word, all is not said until the word is distinctly set forth as a word of command. A word of promise and of life it is, yet promise and life are conditioned upon obedience to command. The King himself has made it plain that there is no such thing as abiding in the word of the King without obeying the commands of the King.

That done, the promise is that those thus abiding shall know the truth, and the truth shall make them free. What truth? Not merely truth in statements. Not merely the truth about God and man. By intimate acquaintance they shall know the truth that Jesus declares himself to be. Truth living with power in his personal life. "I am the truth," he said, and it is the truth of the "I am" that the abiders know. It is noticeable that he did not call upon his followers to seek truth. When we abide in his word truth seeks us. Then we have no need to chase the Spirit of truth. The Spirit comes to us and guides us into the truth. So it is truth in the very life of the Son of God that makes us free. And we have the word of the Son for it that those made free by him are free indeed. When he calls laborers and heavily laden travelers to find rest unto the soul, that rest is to be found only by taking his yoke upon them. An ox does not rest when the yoke is put on. He rests when the yoke is taken off. But a human soul can rest yoked with Jesus Christ because the King takes the short end of the yoke and thus gets nearer to the burden, and bears more of its weight, than the friend with whom he is yoked. He calls to freedom from anxiety, but his antidote for anxious care is seeking first

the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and that kingdom must be sought through obedience to the King.

Does one ask, "How can these things be?" The explanation is found in the simple fact that where there is loyal love and implicit trust it is not bondage to do the will of the beloved. And when the beloved is the Christ of God, to do his will strikes all fetters from the soul and removes all sense of galling restraint. This is freedom, not against his will nor from his will, but in his will. This is the freedom of blended wills. Here it is that the human spirit shares the freedom of the eternal Spirit. To make the will of God expressed in his Son, Jesus Christ, the law of the life, to suffer the will of God as his best for the life, to do nothing but his will, to adopt his will as one's own will, to do and suffer his will so completely as the will of the life that the two wills are one will—this is freedom as boundless as the divine nature. The person thus dedicated feels no bonds. The single responsibility brings exhilarating release from the burden of all other responsibilities. The cares of the world are taken over into the care of God. There is no pain of thwarted desire, for all conflicting desires are swallowed up in the gratified desire of merging the life in the gracious purpose of

God. Fear of disaster gives way to trust in God who has pledged to his own all he has and all he is. Anxious thought for the morrow of time or eternity disappears in peace which passes understanding. The spirit is as free as a bird on the wing. The buoyant soul of Edward Perronet must have been rejoicing in this freedom when he sang in exultant strain:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

"Let every kindred, every tribe
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all."

CHAPTER XII

AS SHEPHERD

In the Old Testament the King does not permit his people to lose sight of the fact that he is also the Shepherd. The scepter is repeatedly being exchanged for the staff. The God who commands as King from Sinai leads forth his own people like sheep, and guides them in the wilderness like a flock. King he is. "Jehovah is King for ever and ever," declares the writer of the tenth psalm. But when we reach the twenty-third psalm somebody chants, "Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall not want." On through the music of the Hebrew psalter these two notes sound together in heavenly harmony. Jehovah is The King. The King is the Shepherd. The prophets have like visions of Jehovah. Isaiah cries, "Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him." The Sovereign comes in might that no man can resist. In the next sentence the prophet assures us that this dread King "will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom."

This intermingling of the ideas of kingship

and shepherding repeatedly appears in the messages of the prophets. The voice of the Lord is the voice of a King when the God of glory thundereth his rebukes, warnings, and judgments. The arm of the Lord is the arm of a King when he governs the nations upon earth and makes the nations know themselves to be but men. But in dealing with his people the heart of the Eternal is ever the heart of a shepherd.

In a vivid passage in his *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* Dr. George Adam Smith describes Judæa as a "land of the stateliest shepherds of all time," and writes of the Judæan shepherd, "On some high moor, across which at night the hyenas howl, when you meet him, sleepless, farsighted, weather-beaten, armed, leaning on his staff and looking out over his scattered sheep, every one of them on his heart, you understand why the shepherd of Judæa sprang to the front in his people's history." And, one may add, why Jehovah revealed himself to their prophets as their Shepherd. It is no wonder that the shepherding office of the King Eternal should be a persistent idea in prophetic lore.

Nor is it any wonder that this Jesus, Son of God and Head of the kingdom, should declare himself to be the Shepherd of his people. In

view of all the other things which he said of himself it would have been little less than amazing had he not said this thing in some way. Surely, it was in the eternal fitness that when angels appeared in glory to announce his birth, they went to shepherds abiding in the field and keeping watch over their flocks by night.

Jesus seems to have been wont to hark back to prophetic words heralding his earthly career. When in the Temple at Jerusalem he declared "I am the good shepherd," and proceeded to set forth in terms which could not be misunderstood some of the things that he would do for his flock, and some of the things that he would be to his flock forever, is it not evident that he had found the place in the book of the prophet Isaiah where it was written of Jehovah, "He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arm," and was it not evident also that he had found the place in the book of Psalms where someone had written "Jehovah is my shepherd, I shall not want"? Surely, that Scripture was fulfilled in the ears of his hearers that day. The sayings of the shepherd chapter of the Gospel of John are the words of one who was familiar with the shepherd psalm and with the entire body of prophetic teaching present-

ing Jehovah as shepherd. These words of the Gospel were spoken to men who from childhood had been familiar with that psalm and those teachings. Both Jesus and his hearers well knew the implications of his words. He could not fail of knowing that he was identifying himself with Jehovah in some vital way. Hence it is not difficult to follow the mental processes of either friends or foes at that time. What question could have been more natural, if it were not inevitable, than to ask, If Jehovah was the Shepherd of Moses, David, and the prophets, who is this Shepherd promising to do godlike things for his sheep? There were two horns to the dilemma of unbelieving hearers. They might regard him as deluded to the verge of insanity, if not beyond; or pronounce him a blasphemer and take up stones to stone him, as they did. All the time, his friends who believed on him and loved him were being impelled toward another conclusion. Teachings and events speedily following tended to confirm it. So when the risen Lord stood by the fire of coals on the shore of Galilee and charged Peter saying, "Feed my lambs, Tend my sheep," they must have been awed by the thought that a greater Shepherd and a greater King than David was there. Could they help saying in the heart,

"This is no other than Jehovah, the Shepherd of Israel"?

It may be noted in passing that while John in the fourth Gospel calls Jesus the Lamb of God, and Peter in his first epistle likens him to a lamb without blemish and without spot, he never speaks of himself as a lamb. Although at the Paschal Supper on the evening before the crucifixion he spoke of his blood as the blood of the covenant poured out for many unto remission of sins, yet in that same night, after the farewell words and the singing of a hymn, as they went out unto the mount of Olives he told the disciples that the Shepherd was to be smitten and the sheep of the flock scattered. In fulfillment of his word the blood of the Shepherd flowed on Calvary the following day. In the Apocalypse he appears as the Lamb enthroned. But when he speaks of coming and sitting on the throne of his glory, it is the Shepherd who is enthroned, and the subjects are his sheep. Of course there is no necessary contradiction here. Who shall say that it is not entirely possible for him to be all that is meant both by Lanb of God and by Shepherd of the human flock?

The fact that he did not speak of himself as the Lamb of God was not due to any inability to take in two sides of a truth in a single ex-

posure. Such a view of facts was easy for the unique Person who was at once Son of God and Son of man, King and servant, and who knew so well both how to rule and how to serve in the same group all the time. In his teaching we find him making quick and easy passage from the fact of the Kingdom to the figure of the flock. In counseling his disciples to dismiss anxiety he said, "Fear not, little flock." Retaining the figure of the flock, he might have continued, "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you rich pasturage and safe shepherding." But he said, "For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

In sending forth the twelve he combines the ideas of harvesting and shepherding. It is written of him that "when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them; because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd." His compassion for these distressed and scattered sheep moved him to call upon the disciples to pray, not for the Father to send forth shepherds to care for scattered sheep, but to pray "the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest." Forthwith he proceeds to call unto him twelve disciples and send them forth, saying to them, Go "to the lost

sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." So the course of thought appears to have been from sheep to harvest, from harvest to sheep and from sheep to kingdom. Why all this unless it was lest we forget that the King is our Shepherd and that we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand?

There are matters of more vital concern. What does this Good Shepherd do for his sheep? He has told part of the story in that shepherd chapter, the tenth of the Gospel by John. From beginning to end of his story of the shepherd in this chapter it is evident that there is one thing which he is not doing, and does not promise to do, for his sheep. He is not maintaining them in a state of ease, or keeping them in any place of freedom from all care, disturbance, and danger. When under his care they are not snugly housed in the fold. In the words of the song,

> "There were ninety and nine that safely lay
> In the shelter of the fold."

But those were not the words of the Lord when he told the story of the lost sheep and the seeking shepherd. No fold is to be seen in the picture. It is noticeable that folds of various kinds are likely to be more numerous

in the verses of songsters than in the Lord's prose. He said of the shepherd that he left "the ninety and nine in the wilderness." We take it for granted that he did not leave them wholly unprotected. He would not be so foolish as to incur the risk of losing ninety-nine sheep in seeking to save one. Were there disaster to the flock, his joy over finding the lost sheep would be drowned in grief over the loss of the others. Undoubtedly, he made adequate provision for the safety of the flock before he started to search for the stray sheep. Possibly they were protected by a fence, or an undershepherd, or in some other way; but if there was a fold in that wilderness, it does not appear in the parable. Jesus never stresses the importance of the fold in speaking of his shepherding. Precisely what he means by the fold he does not explain. Evidently, it is more a condition than a place—a sheltered condition; a condition of protection from the attacks of annoyers, disturbers, and persecutors; of freedom from hard and painful experiences; of ease, comfort, and pleasurable gratifications; a condition rather more needed for the welfare of a real sheep than for the highest good of a real man or woman. In the shepherd chapter the shepherd visits the fold once and gets away from it immediately. There are no

words in the whole story more significant than these, describing the first thing that he does for the sheep after calling the roll of the flock, "and leadeth them out." The shepherd lives to do just that thing. It is not his business to keep the sheep in the fold. He is not needed for that. The porter can attend to it. Possibly the shepherd's dog might stand at the door and do it so effectively that not one sheep could get out. Virtually the whole mission of the shepherd is to lead the sheep out. That is seen in the twenty-third psalm, where one of the flock is telling his own story. There is no fold in sight, but the shepherd is never out of sight. This trustful sheep is in the field. Although he has a vision of the house of the Lord somewhere ahead, that peaceful haven is at the end of the road. So it is in the Master's account of himself as the Good Shepherd. His sheep are for the field rather than the fold. He leads them out. He has been doing it through the centuries. Apostles, reformers, Pilgrim Fathers, and other varieties of saints were led out.

Not into green pastures and beside still waters only does he lead his sheep. He promises that they shall find pasture. But where? The pasturage of Judæa was not on broad meadows and undulating plains. Rather in

patches of fertile soil amid wild glens, or on steep slopes and rocky heights. Much of it was found in the wilderness near dens of wild beasts. The sheep must pass from one plot of pasture to another through desolate and perilous places. In reading the Shepherd Psalm we may have been wont to hear the murmur of rivulets and to look upon the loveliness of fertile glades. To miss such sounds and sights in listening to the cadences of the psalm would be a sad mistake. But desolate passes and jagged precipices are to be seen there, if we will look for them between the lines. If we will pause in our reading and listen, we may hear the roar of the lion and the howl of the wolf. Treading the paths of God's righteousness is not likely to be a stroll through pleasure grounds all the way. Our shepherd King, who was born in Judæa, appears to have kept the features of the rugged pasture lands of that country in mind when he talked about leading out his sheep. Often into difficulties and dangers does he lead them. Sometimes into the gloom of the valley of the shadow of death. In some respects the foxes that burrow in the fields will have the advantage of them. He greets those who desire to join his flock with the assurance that every one of them must deny self and take up the cross, if they are to

go with the Shepherd. In the world field the flock will have tribulation. Nevertheless, he bids them be of good cheer, since he has overcome the world.

Assuredly, there must be a divine purpose back of all this, and our Lord has not left us in doubt concerning the end sought in his shepherding. He has come that the sheep may have life, and have it abundantly. A sheltered fold is not the best place for the development of abundant and triumphant life. The powers of such life are developed with the shepherd in the midst of the toils, struggles, pains, and achievements of the field. Furthermore, considering life as a whole, in all its length and breadth, often it may be safer in the field than in the fold. Especially is this likely to be the case under the care of a really good shepherd. In the days when Israel's hero was a shepherd, if a lion or a bear came out to seize one of the flock, David smote the beast and saved the lamb. Both sheep and lambs were safe, not because there was a fold in some place, but because David was in the right place. When the bear approached it was safer for the sheep to run to David than it would have been to run for the fold. To start for the fold probably would have meant death. To keep close to David certainly meant life.

In an infinitely larger sense something like this is true of this Son of David and Son of the Highest, our Shepherd. He has given his pledge that his sheep shall not perish. The body may be killed, but no destroyer shall be able to kill the soul. Why shall they not perish? What shall save them from the destroyer? Will some fold do it? Doubtless folds are good, when they are good folds. Doubtless folds have their uses, when they are properly constructed and conducted, but life is of the Lord. And not once does he affirm that any kind of fold will save the life of the sheep. This he does say, "No one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who hath given *them* unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Whatever the mystic meaning here, whether there are two separate hands or the two hands are one hand, this is certain: the safety of the sheep lies not in the safeguards of any kind of fold but in the power of the Shepherd. He sets that forth in striking phrase along the course of the shepherd chapter. He knows his own and his own know him. He calls his own sheep by name. They hear his voice and know it as the voice of their Shepherd. As he calls their names they follow him. He goes

before them, leading them out. Oftentimes out from haunts which they dearly love. Far out he leads. All the way unto the boundless fields of eternal life he leads. Under his care they find food which abideth unto life that cannot die; water of life to quench thirst of soul. And other things vastly different from these they find. There are hardships along the way, pains, bereavements, sorrows, crosses, graves. Yet are they never beyond the reach of the Shepherd's hand, and that hand is mighty to save.

The discipline of the field, under the compassionate care of the Shepherd, and in vital union with him, promotes an abounding life for the sons and daughters of God. The wear of toil is forgotten in the joy of service. Darkness and defeat drive afflicted souls nearer to the Shepherd. Disappointments urge on to the making of new appointments, and to the putting forth of stronger efforts in closer fellowship with him. Weaknesses, necessities, and distresses give him opportunity to do far more for his followers than they could ever do for themselves. Losses in the realm of gain bring wealth in the realm of reward. Surmounting obstacles and gaining victories by the Shepherd's help strengthen faith. To those who walk by faith the waning of the material is

the dawning of the spiritual. The present help of the Shepherd, and deliverances by him in times of trouble, inspire hope for greater blessings in the future. Bereavements refine and deepen human loves and help to make them divine. The breaking of one tie makes possible the perfecting of a stronger and holier tie. Separations from the earthly lead to alliances with the heavenly.

In view of all this it is no more than we should expect that the one thus led out by the Good Shepherd goes forth singing:

"The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his,
And he is mine forever."

CHAPTER XIII

AS SACRIFICE

EVERY reader who is familiar with the Master's talk to his disciples about the good shepherd must be aware that the preceding chapter did not deal with the whole story. One thing which the shepherd does for the sheep, as he repeatedly declares, was not mentioned. He lays down his life for the sheep. The Son of God has found his way out of the glory that he had with the Father before the world was into these earthly fields. This Son is King in his own right. The King becomes the Shepherd. The Shepherd goes so far from the throne in his sacrificial shepherding as to lay down his life for the sheep.

It does not appear in the record that Jesus spoke to his disciples of his death in their behalf until he had reached the later periods of his ministry. His prediction of the fact and manner of his death was the introduction of a new element into his teaching. To the disciples it was a disturbing element. Immediately after Peter's declaration of their conviction that their Master was no other than "the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus

"began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Thus, as soon as they were convinced of the fact of his Messianic character and office, he began to set forth the tragic method of Messiahship. The prediction was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. They could not understand it. They would not believe it. Peter regarded it as his privilege and duty to inform his Lord that it was impossible that such things would come to pass. Jesus made an appropriate answer to this rebuke on the spot. Another answer to the doubts of the disciples was soon to follow. It seems to have been of set purpose that once in his earthly life, and rather late in his ministry, our Lord made a trip northward with his disciples quite a distance from his customary haunts. Was it to keep a tryst with the Father, as Elijah journeyed to Horeb? Or was it that a revelation might come to the disciples? Was it for his sake, or their sake, or both? Be that as it may, he took Peter, James, and John apart from the others, and with them climbed a high mountain, as if by appointment. The mountaintop experience of that day was a benison to the three men, bringing something

new and abiding into their outlook upon two worlds and their thought of God and of his Son, Jesus Christ. This thrice-told tale of the Gospels is a familiar story. As the Son of the Highest prayed they saw him transfigured before them, the fashion of his countenance being altered, and they beheld Moses and Elijah talking with him. At the end of the heavenly interview they heard the voice of God speaking out of an overshadowing cloud, and saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Thus the Father himself warned them not to rebuke his Son, in whom he was well pleased, as Peter had presumed to do, but to hear, heed, believe, and obey him. How much of the conversation with the visitors from the celestial regions the disciples heard and understood we do not know. At least they were somehow made aware that the topic of that conversation was the "decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." Maybe it was needful for something like this to take place to impress upon those simple minds the fact that it was possible for this wonder-working Fulfiller of Israel's age-long hope to die. In the home of Jairus the three who had witnessed the dazzling glory of his interview with visitors from the world of spirits had seen

him take the hand of a dead girl in his hand, a hand so charged with life that she lived, arose, walked, and proceeded to take her daily food. They had seen him halt a funeral procession on the highway, touch the bier on which the body of a widow's son was being carried to burial, bring the young man back to a life of immediate speech and action, and restore him to his mother. How could they believe that death could prevail against such an easy conqueror of death? When he should have finished his career on earth would not a chariot be sent from the skies to bear him away to his Father's house? Was he not greater and more worthy of translation than that Elijah who once fled from an angry woman, sank down under a juniper-tree, and prayed that he might die? A chariot for Elijah and a cross for the Messiah? There is no indication that it had occurred to those disciples that the One who could accomplish resurrections for others might accomplish a decease in himself, and thus through death open an entrance for many into eternal life. Of one thing they appear to have felt certain, namely, he would not die until he had achieved his victory as the Messiah. Even if they did reach the point of accepting the idea of some experience of death and resurrection some-

where in the program of the Messiah, they could not believe in the immediateness of such events. The time element in the work of the Eternal has been a puzzle to many, sometimes even to the prophets. Times and seasons in working out the divine purposes, and the peculiarities of the processes involved, were yet baffling mysteries to the disciples.

It is recorded that Jesus referred to the deeper meaning and potency of his sacrificial experience as he was going up with set face and steady tread to his doom at Jerusalem. To his disciples he said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." This is his only reference to the giving of his life as a ransom, and he makes no explanation of the use of the term. Since in common usage of the word a ransom is a price paid by one person to another person to secure the release or to save the life of a third person, if Jesus uttered this saying as a literal statement of fact, devoid of any figurative signification, he must have meant that his life was a price paid to some person to save the life of many. Then, of course, the question arises, To whom did he pay the price?—a question which used to be much discussed, and has been answered in more than one way. But whether the word

"ransom" is to be taken literally or figuratively, it hardly can be regarded as the emphatic word in the lesson which Jesus seeks to teach his disciples. Two of them have become ambitious, and have enlisted the winsome influence of their mother to secure for themselves the highest places in the kingdom which they expect soon to be established with pomp and power. Naturally, this unholy ambition on the part of two arouses unholy indignation on the part of the other ten, and creates a disturbance in the apostolic band. Jesus calls the entire group together for the purpose of rebuking ambition for preferment and teaching a lesson of humble and sacrificial service. In enforcing that lesson he reminds them that he came for the express purpose of giving his life to the utmost in rendering such service. It is hardly open to question that for the purpose of teaching such a lesson the more important thing in his sacrifice is the fact of giving his life rather than the precise kind of transaction or operation involved in giving it. Here is the fact: he gives his life. Whether as an actual ransom, or in some way like a ransom, there is a real giving up his life, that many may receive life. As the one who came that his own flock might have life and have it abundantly, he gives.

Not only does he give his life in behalf of many, but he also gives his life *unto* many. In this gift life flows out from him into them. In his earthly career something of the kind was continually taking place. Power went forth from him to the sick, giving them the energy of new life. In the story of the woman healed of the issue of blood it is explicitly stated that Jesus perceived in himself that the power proceeding from him had gone forth. Likewise through his death, in some way, the same thing takes place, only the greater sacrifice must produce a greater effect. This comes out in further statements of our Lord.

Twice in the gospel records he uses the word "remission" in speaking of sins. In only one of these two instances does he use it as certainly denoting something brought to pass, wholly or in part, by means of his death. As Matthew gives the account of his Last Supper with the twelve he "took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." In the other two accounts the word remission does not occur. According to Mark he said, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many"—word for word the statement of Matthew with the

omission of the concluding words, "unto remission of sins." Luke reports him as saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; even that which is poured out for you," making no mention of the remission of sins. There is no intimation in the gospel records that Jesus specifically explained what he meant by remission. Neither did the writers explain what is meant by it. Both Mark and Luke characterize the baptism of John as "the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins." Luke states that the risen Lord opened the mind of the disciples that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them that it is written "that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations." That comprises all mention of remission in the Gospels with the possible exception of the somewhat enigmatic declaration of the risen Lord to all the apostolic group save Thomas, when he breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." In the Revised Version the terms "forgive" and "forgiven" occur instead of "remit" and "remitted," a rendering which appears to be at

least quite as true to the original as is the other. Evidently, not only did Jesus put forth no theory of remission, but the fact itself, as mentioned in the Gospels by him, is conditioned upon the repentance of the sinner as well as upon the death of the sinner's Lord. Of course it does not follow from this that the two things must be equally important.

Jesus did distinctly claim authority to forgive sins, and on more than one occasion he did exercise that authority. Moreover, it comes out in his teaching concerning sin and righteousness that his dealing with sin, together with the dealing of his Father with sin, is not exclusively a work wrought outside the sinner, but that a great part of that work is done at the very core of the sinner's life. Among the things accomplished by forgiveness, one is released from the clutch and bondage of sin. One meaning of the word rendered "forgive" is to send away. Divine forgiveness somehow sends sin away from the sinner. Christ makes it clear that in harmony with that meaning his idea of forgiveness and remission is not expiation merely, but that it includes extraction and eradication. The priestly view doubtless he had. The prophetic view certainly he had; and that view regards God as saying, "Though your sins be as scarlet,

they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," and as bringing that word to pass in the forgiven soul. Whatever may be true of the dealing of the Father and Son with sin in a legal way, it is certain that they deal with it in a vital way. The Saviour undertakes to get the poison of sin out of the life, to make the life clean, to deal with the life until it shall be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect. How can he accomplish that, how can he save the lost to such abundant life, without pouring his life into their life? And is not such giving of life included in laying down his life for his flock? Let us see.

It was earlier in his ministry than his deliverances in regard to ransom and remission that Jesus spoke those gracious words recorded in the shepherd chapter. He said, "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down

of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." It is commonly understood that he meant by this that he would die for the sheep. Surely he did mean no less than that, but it is not always recognized that he meant vastly more. He said his enemies would kill him; and so they did, but in all the killing which they were able to do they did not take his life from him. That they could not do. Laying down the life of such a Son of God as he, was a thing as much greater than mortal death as the immortal is greater than the mortal. This expression comes by translation from a Greek verb of common use, yet so rarely used in the sense here employed that it has been said by those who should know that John only of the New Testament writers uses it, and that it is seldom found thus employed elsewhere in Greek writings. According to the bald meaning of the word in general usage, Jesus would here be saying that he would *place* his life, or *set it apart*, somewhere, somehow, for the sake of the sheep. The same Greek word is used by Luke in telling how the palsied man was *placed* before Jesus to be healed; by Paul in declaring that other foundation can no man lay, or *place*, than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus; and by Peter in repeating the

statement of Isaiah that God *lays* in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious. In these statements of the laying of Christ as a foundation no idea of dying necessarily enters. Indeed, the context makes it clear that the foundation mentioned is a living Christ. Interpreting the statement of Jesus in the light of all that he says of himself as the Good Shepherd in the shepherd chapter, it is evident that when he speaks of laying down his life for the sheep he can mean no less than that he irrevocably dedicates his life to their service, gives his life to be spent in their behalf, makes complete devotion of his life to them for time and eternity. This is the greatest thing he does for his own. Indeed, it includes all he does, and all that the infinite Christ can do, for them.

The shepherd of this world whose life is laid down, in the sense of being wholly devoted to the welfare of his flock, may be wounded in their defense, maimed and crippled beyond repair; he may be slain even; or he may continue in full vigor of life to care for them. And not often is it the best thing he can do for the sheep to die for them. When the shepherd is smitten the flock is likely to be scattered and devoured; hence in most emergencies it is better for the shepherd to live for the sheep.

Little good would it be to his own for the heavenly Shepherd to lay down his life in death for them in such a way as to be lost from the field. Then the sheep might say, "He was a Shepherd with a kind heart; he was a lover of the flock; he was faithful unto death but he can do no more for us."

> "Now he is dead, far hence he lies
> In the lone Syrian town.
> And on his grave, with shining eyes,
> The Syrian stars look down."

But for this Shepherd to die is not the whole of death. He is not just like the earthly shepherd who fights with beasts in defense of his sheep and dies fighting, leaving them to be slaughtered and eaten. Though he dies for them he does not cease to live for them. The laying down of his life, instead of taking him from the sheep, results in giving them more of the power of that life. Instead of depriving them of his ministry it makes his ministry increasingly effective in saving and keeping them. There is something timeless in the laying down of his life. His word of cheer is not, "I *have* laid down my life"; nor yet, "I *will* lay down my life"; but the statement of the ever-present fact, "I lay down my life for the sheep." This is not something which has been done to the finish in the past, or is

wholly to be done in the future, or is being done to completion in any present time which can be bounded and defined. He is laying down his life in an eternal now, which is, and was, and is to be. Since this Son of man and Son of God can both die and live for us, since by dying for us he can live in us by imparting his own life to us, it is for us divinely worth while for him to die.

Was not the death of Christ infinitely more than the expiring of the physical man on the cross? Was it not both death of the kind which every man and woman must die and beyond that, death of a kind which only the Son of God could die? In laying down his life does he not make the supreme sacrifice in the Life Divine? Was not he the only one who ever did, or ever could, make the supreme sacrifice; the only one who, out of his own life, could pour undying life into other lives? Surely, such a sacrifice is foreshadowed in his words to Nicodemus. To him Jesus says: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Yes, he really gave. He did not merely lend his Son. It would be telling but a small part of the wondrous story to say that God yielded his Son to earthly toils and discomforts for a few years, to bodily torture for a single day, and to bodily disso-

lution for three days. He eternally gave his Son at immeasurable cost to the heart and life of the Father. True, this is fumbling after a divine fact with human terms, but we can use no other. Was there not a profound intimation of the need and efficacy of this supreme sacrifice in the words spoken by our Lord at his Last Supper with his disciples, in bidding them partake of the emblems of his death in remembrance of him? In giving them the bread why did he say "Take, eat; this is my body"; and in giving them the wine, "Drink ye all of it"? Why should they eat and drink symbols of his sacrificial death? Why not enshrine them in some place as accessories of worship and aids to devotion, like the manna kept in the ark of the covenant? It may be said that connection with the Passover is sufficient to account for his institution of a rite of eating and drinking. But he did not say it; at least we have no record of such a saying. On this occasion and on other occasions he said things which open the way of thought to something beyond the region of merely paschal ideas. Luke reports him as saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Does not the new covenant center in a fact far more vital than the central fact of the Hebrew Passover? Surely, our Lord

conceived of his sacrificial work as greater than a Passover. Not as the passing over of an angel of death but, rather, as an entrance of the power of an endless life. Was not this, then, the reason for instituting the rite of eating and drinking in remembrance of him, that through his death he was to become food to sustain the life of souls; and by the shedding of his blood, and by all the outpouring of life which it signifies, he was to become an elixir of life unto souls? Not only are the bread and wine symbols of his sacrifice, but the acts of eating and drinking also are symbols of receiving life through that sacrifice.

For his own statement of the facts thus symbolized turn to his discourse on the Bread of Life, spoken to the crowd whose hunger he had appeased with loaves and fishes on the preceding day, and who had flocked to him again hoping that he would continue to multiply loaves and fishes, and thus satisfy the hungry stomachs of his followers to the end of the world. He couches his message to the multitude in the following astonishing plainness of speech. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall

give unto you. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. . . . I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. . . . I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven:

not as the fathers ate, and died; he that eateth this bread shall live forever."

No wonder many of his disciples murmured, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" It is not an easy saying to anybody. Evidently, it was not intended to be easy. The Life-Giver was putting forth profound truth in startling figures of speech. And yet the figures are closely related, even vitally related, to the truths which loom behind them. Of course the Good Shepherd is not summoning his sheep to engage in cannibalism, either gross or refined, either of flesh or of spirit. There is to be no literal masticating his flesh or swallowing his blood. Probably the hearers who balked at the hard saying did not understand that to be his teaching. Those ancients of the East were accustomed to the use of imagery, both ordinary and extraordinary, in the presentation of truth. Their trouble was that he had passed out of the region of loaves and fishes into a realm with which they were not acquainted. Just what he meant by such strange words they could not fathom, but no doubt it seemed to them that the thing which he had in mind, whatever it might be, must be an awful thing. Indeed, it was an awful thing, and yet a blessed reality. The visible agony of the cross was awful, but there

is an invisible reality of life-giving, in the sacrifice of the Son of God, which should both overwhelm the souls of men with deeper awe and thrill them with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There is an actual partaking of the Christ by those who really live his life. Not of the real body and blood, anywhere, anyhow, but of the real life typified by the flesh and blood. He said it in his teaching and he said it in his praying. He spoke to his disciples such words as these, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit. . . . In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." In prayer he spoke to the Father such words as these: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one. . . . I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them."

There was more than one reason for teaching us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." More than one meaning speaks to us as well as to the Father in that petition. Daily bread we need to nourish the body. Without it the body dies. Daily bread we need to vitalize the soul. Without it the soul must perish. Thousands of deaths from stall,

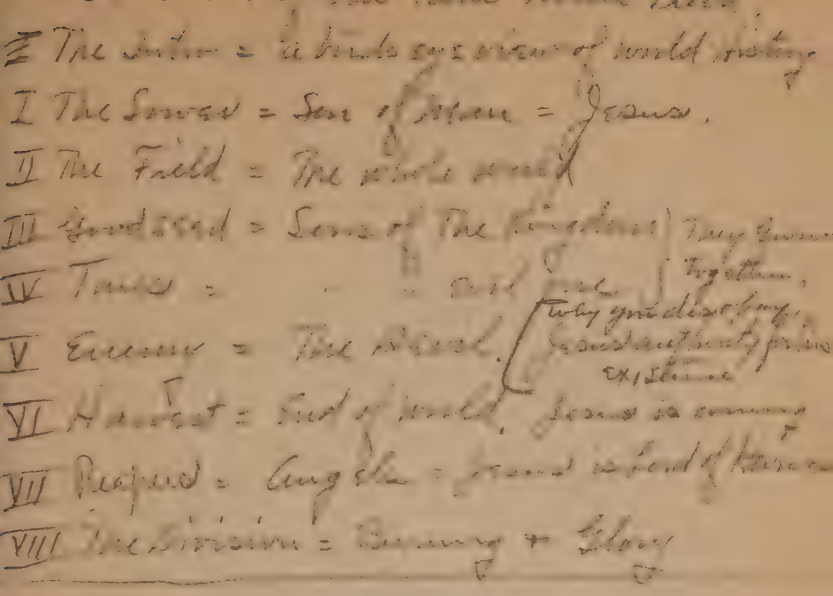
orchard, and harvest field load our tables with food for the body. One death in the laying down of a single life provides life for the soul. In all this we do not forget Christ's assurance of his continuance in life with life-giving power. He said "Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also." Assuredly, he lives. Not only with the Father to whom he went nineteen centuries ago, but also in the life of his disciples to abide there forever, does he live. Herein is a paradox in Life Divine. In death itself he lives in his own, victorious over death. Therefore the one who is made partaker of the divine nature by his life can exclaim, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me."

Many perplexed disciples ask, "How can these things be?" Well, if in declaring the truth involved in the laying down of his life he does not tell us how these things can be, he does tell us that they are; and if we have the power of the fact in the life we can afford to wait a while for the how of the fact. Often our teachers have reminded us that Jesus spoke of having many things in mind which he had not told because his disciples were not prepared to receive them and could not yet bear them. Truths lying at the heart of his sacrificial work must have been some of these

things. Let it be admitted that in his teaching he did not traverse the entire range of truth in the region of his supreme sacrifice, but only touched upon a few mountain peaks of fact here and there; that should not cause us to ignore what he did tell or to belittle its importance. All the more should we take to heart the things asserted.

This truth of laying down the life appears in somewhat different guise when the Master is told that certain Greeks, among those who had come up to worship at the feast of the Passover, desired an interview with him. It was on Tuesday of passion week. He was only three days from the cross, and he knew it. His soul was troubled. Although his human flesh would cry, "Father, save me from this hour," his faithful soul did cry, "Father, glorify thy name." In that stress of sacrificial devotion he expressed himself in terms of the earthly harvest field. This was his message to those inquiring Greeks, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

The Sower soweth his own life in the harvest fields of earth. Does he lose his life? If he does, it is as true for the Master as for the disciple that whosoever shall lose his life for the gospel's sake shall save it.


HARVEST

CHAPTER XIV

PRESENCE

THE Sower is not always to be seen in the field. Yet as Householder in the parable itself and as Son of man in the explanation, whether present or absent, visible or invisible, he is ever Lord of the field. And when the time for garnering comes he is the present Lord, giving his personal attention to the harvesting. Is this the "second coming" of the Lord? He did not number his comings. Others did it after his resurrection. It is at least an open question if he thought of his appearance at harvest time as a "second" earthly appearance.

In his farewell talk recorded in the fourth Gospel Jesus has much to say of a future presence with his friends. They are to be with him yonder, and he is to be with them here. We are well aware that this Gospel is composed mostly of a record of sayings and doings of the Master selected for a definite purpose. The writer has frankly told us that. He avows that the things found in his book are written that we may "believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that believing we "may have life in his name." Furthermore, he

states that "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written." And if we accept at their face value the statements of the prologue concerning the creative activities of the Word, this reference to an overflowing world of books is not so great an exaggeration as at first thought it might appear to be. From beginning to end the fourth Gospel presents to us the heavenward side of the words and works of Jesus. He is constantly kept before us as the eternal Son and Revealer of the Father. His life is a light shining in darkness which neither comprehends nor overcomes it. Incredible as it may appear to human understanding, this Son and Revealer of the Father declares that he has not only descended out of heaven but is also in heaven, and tells us heavenly things.

On the night before his departure from earthly scenes by the Golgotha road he tells his disciples that he goes away, comes again, and will receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also. Presently he goes on to say that he is not leaving them desolate; he comes to comfort them. But that is not the whole of the divine arrival for com-

panionship and comfort. He proceeds to assure them that the Father loves the man who loves the Son and keeps the words of the Son, and to that one the Father and the Son will come, and will make their abode with him. Yet even this is not the whole truth of the divine coming. Immediately before giving them these assurances he had said that the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, would come to abide with them and be in them forever. The Father would send the Holy Spirit. Later in his talk he says that *he* will send the Comforter. Does it not appear in all this that the coming of the Holy Spirit is, in fact, the coming of both Father and Son? Since the Father and the Son are one, is not the Holy Spirit that one in the thought and speech of the Son? Otherwise how could he have said, "I go away, and I come unto you," and again in the same conversation, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you"?

All this, of course, is comforting to the believer whose soul pants for companionship with the living God as the hart pants after the waterbrooks, but it falls short of being the coming of the Lord to take his own to the place prepared for them. It is different also

from a fulfillment of his promise to Nathanael recorded in the first chapter of this Gospel, that he "shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." It is beyond controversy that in the first three Gospels he repeatedly speaks of another and vastly different coming. In the confidences of the upper room he talks about a coming which is to take place in a "little while." In the other Gospels he speaks of a coming so far from his departure that his followers must wait and watch for it. He will be like the bridegroom who did not come so soon as he was expected by those who went forth to meet him. When the Master put forth the parable of the unjust judge "to the end that they ought always to pray and not to faint," back of all is the unspoken yet haunting thought that it is a long wait to the coming of the Son of man—so long, indeed, that at the end he puts the question, "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" On that night when Mary anointed his body aforehand for burial in an act of devotion to be spoken of as a memorial of her throughout the whole world he must have been looking long ahead and far away, including in the sweep of his vision centuries of discovery and uplift from barbarism. And

when he spoke to his disciples of a necessary prelude to his coming, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations," they should have realized that he could have had no fewer nations in view than all the tribes dominated by Rome. His own experience as preacher of the gospel was sufficient to demonstrate that heralding the good news unto the utmost limits of the vast empire of Cæsar would be a long task for his followers. He was planning for them something immeasurably longer than a campaign for a single season. It would be a world-wide and age-long crusade. Into it must go the labor and life of generations of his followers—all this before his coming for the harvest.

The coming foretold in the upper room is to be invisible to the world. This is his pledge to his own, "I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me." On other occasions, as recorded in the other Gospels, a spectacular coming was foretold. He will come "in the glory of the Father." Men shall "see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." He tells his disciples that when he shall come in his glory all the nations shall be gathered before him. Evi-

dently, he will not be invisible to them, for he explicitly declares, "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven." Even though there may be much that is figurative in the coming thus depicted, it cannot be identical with his coming as an invisible and abiding power in the very life of his disciples.

It is true that in his instructions to the twelve when he called them unto him and sent them forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, he said, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." However he may have said it, and whatever he may have meant by it, of this we may be certain: he could not have meant that he was to be crucified, rise on the third day, ascend into heaven, and come back to earth before their return from the trip upon which he was starting them. One thing can hardly fail to be evident, and another thing to appear as likely, to any person who gives careful study to the tenth chapter of Matthew in connection with the tenth chapter of Luke. It is evident that we have recorded here both directions for a short tour among the Jews of little Palestine, and certain instructions regarding the preaching of the gospel by his

representatives throughout the whole world, for which the short Palestinian tour was the prelude. It is likely that he was sending forth the twelve, as he sent forth the seventy at another time, "before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come." That being the case, he meant that there would be time for them to visit only a part of the towns of Israel before he would be starting out on his own tour.

It is true also that on a certain occasion he said to the twelve, "I tell you of a truth, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in nowise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." Thus Luke reports the saying. While Matthew and Mark report the first part in harmony with Luke, they change the wording of the last clause. According to Matthew the last words were "till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," and according to Mark he concludes with the words, "till they see the kingdom of God come with power." However he said it, the three agree in telling us that about six or eight days afterward he took three of these twelve men up into a high mountain apart, where they beheld his face shining as the sun, and Moses and Elijah talking with him. If this transfiguration be regarded as a foregleam of his future

appearing in glory, of which appearing he was wont to speak, no further explanation would seem to be needed of the words, "shall in no wise taste of death till they see." After that experience on the mountain Peter, James, and John had seen enough for the fulfillment of his prediction.

It has been noted in a previous chapter that although it was given unto the disciples to know mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, there were occasions when that spiritual gift did not wholly prevent them from getting the sayings of their Lord entangled among their own preconceived ideas. This entanglement appears to have resulted in confusing his statements in regard to events immediately at hand with predictions of far-off events. Of this tendency on their part he was well aware, and against its perils he repeatedly warned them. Especially did he remind them that his promised return was a matter upon which they were likely to deceive themselves and be deceived by others. With that peril in mind he said, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. . . . And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." Apparently with the same danger in mind he made the astonishing statement, "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the

angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." That long talk with his disciples about tragic developments ahead contains such admonitory instructions as the following: "Take heed that no man lead you astray. . . . These things must needs come to pass, but the end is not yet. . . . All these things are the beginning of travail. . . . Many false prophets shall arise and lead many astray. . . . There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."

Is it not beyond reasonable question that in many sayings cited from the first three Gospels in foregoing paragraphs the fact of a spectacular appearing of the Son of man was predicted by him? Concerning the date of this appearing the most that can be gathered with certainty from his words is that it will take place after a long series of tremendous events. Nor is the manner of the appearing precisely foretold. It is glimpsed in startling statements indicating that heaven and earth will be moved by manifestations of divine power. To what profit could we seek to unravel the mystery of times, seasons, and apocalyptic wonders known to the Father only? All we need take to heart concerning the future

revealing of our Lord may be summed up as included in one satisfying word used several times in the Master's sayings to characterize it. That word is *Parousia.* Does it mean a coming? Yes, and more than a coming. It is not the usual Greek word for expressing the fact of coming. It has deeper content and wider implications. It may include approach and arrival, and as it occurs in the record of Christ's statements of developments to be expected in his own future, undoubtedly it does include all that. Yet vastly more. Its foremost and inevitable meaning is *Presence.* He foretold a Presence, a vivid, pervasive, hallowing, dominating, victorious Presence. When we read, "as the lightning cometh forth from the East, and is seen even unto the West; so shall be the coming of the Son of man," we do well to note that back in the original two words, differing widely in their meaning, have been rendered in the English of the New Testament by the one word, "come," in two of its forms. The Master does not say merely that he will come as lightning comes. What he really does say is, "As the lightning cometh from the East, and is seen unto the West; so shall be the *Presence* of the Son of man." A great Presence may flash, yet in itself it is far more than a flash. Not merely like a blaze of

lightning shooting across the sky will his *Presence* be, but a revealing splendor bathing the world in its light divine. Again, when we read, "As *were* the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man," we do well to note that the same Greek word, "Parousia," engulfs in its larger scope the idea of a mere arrival. He was not simply telling his disciples that he would come as the flood came. In some signal way, as those days were before the flood, when Noah was realizing the presence and guidance of Jehovah, and Noah's neighbors were eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, and having a good time generally, so shall the *Presence* of the Son of man be in days to come.

Doubtless there was a certain presence of the Son of God in the days of Noah and of all patriarchs and prophets. Long afterward there was a more blessed presence of the Son in the days of his incarnate ministry. After a few years in the flesh he told his followers that it was expedient for him to go away, that in the ministry of the Holy Spirit there might be yet another Presence of the Christ—which Presence we now have; sometimes moving us to exclaim in holy awe, "Surely the Lord is in this place!" When his promise of the *Parousia* shall be fulfilled, there will be a

triumphant Presence of the Son of God filling heaven, earth, and human souls with his power and glory.

"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Some of the events to accompany this future Presence, and some of the results to be brought to pass by it, according to his own sure word of prophecy, will be considered in following chapters.

CHAPTER XV

CONSUMMATION

"THE harvest is the end of the world." Without a harvest the sowing would be loss of time, strength, and seed. When a storm of wind and hail demolishes the crop, the labor, care, expenditure of energy in sunlight, rain, and soil—all the efforts of heavenly and earthly forces to promote growth have gone for naught. All that goes before the harvest is in the realm of means to an end. The harvest is an end in itself. Yet not a finality for the wheat. It makes possible other and larger harvests in days to come. If "the creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn," who can tell what a single life from the harvest field of the Son of man may bring forth in the future ages of the kingdom of God? Jesus was in the field for the sake of a harvest. Without the prospect of a harvest of fruit unto life eternal would he have been seen in earthly fields? Would he not have stayed with the Father? The reasons which he gave for his presence here would appear to support that view.

Certainly, he ever speaks as the forward-

looking Messiah. Dwelling in glory with the Father before the world was, loved by the Father before the foundation of the world, he might have given us some interesting revelations and reminiscences. Had he been like some of his followers he would have indulged himself and us in that way. Although an apostle knew it was not expedient for him to glory, fourteen years after being caught up into heaven for a brief visit, he could not refrain from mentioning his experiences in the high and holy place. The Lord of that apostle was too busy working for a harvest in the earthly field to be talking much about the heaven which he had left behind. He was intent upon promoting the joys of men, angels, and the Father himself in the heaven ahead. In all his recorded teaching there are barely a half dozen references, either clear or shadowy, to his experiences in the ages before Abraham was. He was there, but here he had more important matters to talk about. The greatest things of the kingdom of heaven were yet to come. Moreover, if we may entertain such a thought reverently, it was not within the bounds of his nature to lapse into the garrulity of age. With eternity before him he was young. Out of the womb of the morning he had the dew of his youth. Is not the youth-

hood of this Son of the living God from everlasting to everlasting?

In harmony with the youthful attitude, the prediction of future events and conditions in the kingdom of heaven bulks large in the sayings of Jesus. Consider where he roams in the parables. In most of them he takes to the future—to be explicit, in no fewer than twenty-two of thirty-five; not in aimless wanderings, but in trips toward a definite goal, and with two exceptions toward the same goal. In more than one half of all his parables he follows some path leading to the issues of human life and to the disclosure of some fact in human destiny.

A conspicuous feature of the predictive element in his teaching is the contrast between his depiction of things to come and the prognostications of such books as the book of Daniel and the Revelation of John. Jesus speaks of wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places, but never of great beasts coming up from the sea, one like a lion having eagle's wings and a man's heart, another like a leopard having four wings of a bird and four heads, and yet another terrible and powerful having great iron teeth and ten horns, three of these horns being uprooted by another little horn with eyes

like the eyes of a man and a mouth speaking great things. When Jesus looks into heaven he sees "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," but he never tells of beholding such a wonder in heaven as a woman travailing in birth with the sun and moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head, and before her a gread red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and drawing a third part of the stars of heaven with his tail. While Jesus does not reveal all that beleaguered and breaking hearts would like to know, neither does he set them guessing over a medley of living creatures having four faces and four wings and straight feet with soles of a calf's foot, coursing through earth and sky accompanied by wheels and wheels within wheels, and eyes in the rims of the wheels, and the spirit of the living creature within the wheels. Nor does he submit for our inspection and acceptance exact counts of angels, elders, sealed servants of the Almighty, beasts, horns, wings, candlesticks, and other articles. Surely, when Jesus spoke, a greater than Daniel, Ezekiel, or the Seer of Patmos was here.

Such symbolizing may be seemly and profitable in the mouth of Hebrew prophets of the olden time, but it would never do for the

Christ of God. It was not for him to preface his predictions with such statements as "I saw in a vision. . . . I saw in my vision by night . . . I saw as it were . . . I looked and lo . . . I saw heaven opened." His simple word of introduction is "Verily, I say unto you." While in his foretelling he deals with what men call the supernatural, he does it in a way eminently natural to the person that he is. No visionary is he. In all his references to the future he deals with facts, and hard facts indeed some of them are. Having the realities in view, he has no use for grotesque symbols of realities. Familiar with heavenly places, even to the apartments of the Father's house, he needs no vision of a cubic city, length, breadth, and height of it equal, coming down out of heaven from God. His teaching of things to come is not a study, not a wrestling with problems, or a solution of problems. Unlike modern thinkers who have much to say about their problems and the problems of other folk, with a single possible exception, he seems never to notice a problem anywhere in the eternities. All is an open book, read by him as easily as he reads the heart of friend or foe. Although he makes thoroughly sane and natural use of imagery in setting forth future outcomes, these scenic

features are picturesque portrayals, in the material realm, of spiritual processes and results in unseen realms.

In speaking of things to come Jesus occasionally refers to some day or period, some occurrence or group of occurrences, as "that day." Although he does not specify what day, by date or descriptive terms, he speaks of it in such a way as to indicate that it is a day which both he and his hearers have in mind, and whose significance is not unknown to them. As he mentions "that day" in the Sermon on the Mount it is the day in which some person will say to him, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" Why will they say that? What will have been said or done to raise such a question? Jesus has been alluding to a coming time when certain issues are to be settled; when the meek shall no longer be kept down and out by the mighty, but shall inherit the earth; when those who violate the principles of brotherhood shall take the consequences of their sin; when some self-satisfied travelers shall have reached a fatal crisis at the end of a broad road; when not only shall the predictions of false prophets be exposed but the prophets themselves shall be brought

to book. Some persons will be willing to raise questions in the vain hope of justifying themselves on that day. He declares that he will then profess unto them, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." It appears unquestionable that this is the day on which certain persons gathered on his left hand will hear a sentence which will fix their doom. It must be the day which he has in mind when he says that it shall be more tolerable in "that day" for Sodom than for the city whose citizens reject the seventy sent before his face to heal the sick and preach the kingdom of God. Certainly, this is a Day of Judgment, for his next words are words of woe for Chorazin and Bethsaida, declaring that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for them. Extended quotation is not needed to show that he was continually speaking of a Judgment to come. He predicts it in an explicit and picturesque way in the familiar figure of the separation of sheep from goats. He declares that men shall give account in the Day of Judgment for every idle word that they speak. He speaks of the resurrection of judgment. He asks certain men how they shall escape the judgment of Gehenna. He asserts that the men of Ninevah and the queen of the

south shall rise up in judgment with certain persons of his generation and condemn them. He sets it forth in parables, the tares, the draw net, the talents, the pounds, the wicked husbandmen. These parables take people over different paths to one goal of judgment. This Day of Judgment as he deals with it is not merely a day for rendering judicial opinions, but a day on which the Judge decides cases and pronounces sentences. It is no less than a day of finalities.

Is it, then, a catastrophic day? Certainly. Every harvest in nature is a catastrophe in some of its features, whether it be a harvest of sturdy oaks or of waving grain. Such an element is apparent to every observer of a harvest gathered from timberlands. It may be seen also in harvests from other fields, as in the parable where the kingdom of God is likened to seed growing; the sower knows not how. According to the marginal reading, "When the fruit alloweth, straightway he sendeth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come." When the sower thus sends forth the sickle, the earth, which has borne the fruit "*of herself*," witnesses a catastrophe ending her care of the fruit, and removing it. Far greater is the catastrophe in the parable of the tares of the field, greater because of the

presence in the field of alien growths, unfit for the garner.

Several times in his discourse on the bread of life, and in his utterances on passion week, Jesus speaks of this great day as the "last day." Such reference to it, of course, is in perfect harmony with his statement that the harvest is "the end of the world," or "the consummation of the age." Doubtless we should bear in mind the danger of making too much of the use of differing words, and of the differing shades of meaning in words, especially when they are not the words originally uttered, but translations of those words, or even translations of translations. Nevertheless, Christ's truth has come down to us in words. Moreover, in fulfillment of his promise, these words have been words of spirit and of life to multitudes of his disciples. Hence we do well to give careful attention to words thus verified in the experiences of the soul. It may be sufficient to note concerning the word rendered "world" or "age" that in the original it is "*æon*," clearly meaning a period of time usually characterized by certain movements and events. It is a matter of common knowledge among students that the word rendered "end" or "consummation," presupposes operations of reach and power. The

word may be said to stand for the culmination of a combination of parts to one end, or of a union of forces and movements for the accomplishment of a far-reaching purpose. Thus it means the completion of a great scheme.

In what sense, then, is this future day, mentioned in the teaching of Jesus, the "last day"? Is it a day beyond which suns shall rise and set no more; or the last day of an order of things, of a chain of days linked together for a purpose, of a period of processes and achievements of some sort? These questions may be answered in a way to suit one's own desires or to fit one's own system of beliefs. But if Jesus regarded the harvest as the consummation of an age, it is reasonable to understand him as meaning by the "last day" the completion of that age. Such an interpretation fits harmoniously into the general tenor of his teaching. It will be a last day because it will mark the elimination and end of some things as certainly as it will be the consummation of some other things—the elimination of hindrances and the consummation of certain processes and achievements in the endless march of the kingdom of God.

Thus our Lord saw the consummation as the triumph of heavenly powers. Goodness

and fruitfulness prevail in the harvest field. Tares forever cease from troubling. The powers seen by him as the prince of this world and the powers of darkness are overcome and their schemes are brought to naught. The field is cleansed from all things that can pollute or hinder the growth of the good seed. The kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit takes full possession, with no fruitage nor seeding for future deviltry left over from the sowing of the evil one. The night work of the devil, in the end, disappears to be seen no more. The sowing of the Son of man brings forth abundant fruit unto life eternal. The final result is wheat.

In Luke's record, manifestly referring to the time of harvest, Jesus speaks of a day when the Son of man shall be "revealed." Evidently, on that day he shall be seen as he is in the full scope and symmetry of his nature. Thus in the Day of Judgment he is to be revealed as the Judge. In the days of his incarnation he would not permit men to press him into a judgeship. He declined to decide a question of right to an inheritance, rebuking the man who submitted the question in the words, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" and issuing a warning against covetousness. On another occasion he

declared, "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." But we do not forget that he said also, "Neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." It is apparent that there is no contradiction in these statements when we note that he refers to two presences of the Son in the world, his presence in the seedtime and his presence in the harvest. That appears from the following words, spoken in connection with the statement that he came not to judge but to save: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." When he came for the sowing long ago he came to save; but on the last day he will come to judge, and the word spoken in the sowing time is the word of truth and authority by which he will judge in the harvest time.

As in the last stage of his earthly journey, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, so throughout the entire march, from baptism to cross, his face is set to go on to the consummation of the last day. The unbroken trend of his teaching and action is constantly revealing the fact that his face is set toward an overcomer's goal. When he declares that

a King shall come in glory to sit on a throne of judgment, there to pronounce sentence upon all nations, and shall say one thing unto those on his right hand and another thing unto those on his left hand, the coming One is no other than the Son of man who is both King and Judge. So that day of the consummation will be the day of his vindication and triumph. We may well believe that on that day, as the apostle has affirmed, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things of the world below; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

CHAPTER XVI

REAPERS

"THE reapers are angels." When the disciples of the Sower asked him to explain the parable of the tares, he thought it worth while to inform them that angels are to be the reapers in the harvest. Surely, they are to have a delicate and important piece of work committed to them, a task more difficult of execution and more decisive in its effects than bringing joyful news with chants of celestial music to the shepherds of Bethlehem. Therefore it must be worth while for us to give attention to the teaching of the Sower in regard to these reapers. We may be among the number of those who have but little interest in angels. We are interested in folks. So was the Sower. Possibly that was one reason why he was interested also in angels. According to his view of future events, angels are to have something vital to do with folks in the final outcome. Since that conviction had a place in the mind of the Master, it shall be our endeavor in this chapter to read from the teaching of Jesus his thought concerning angels, with special reference to their part in the

consummation at the end of the age. And for the sake of getting his ideas clearly before us it may be well to review briefly all that he said about angels.

Beginning with the plain statement in his explanation of the parable of the tares as a moving picture of the life of the kingdom of God in the world field, we read, "The reapers are angels. As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Thus their office in the culmination of events in the Kingdom will be somewhat like the work of farm laborers in cleaning up a field infested with useless and noxious growths. This lesson is repeated in the parable of the net which brings up from the sea fishes of all kinds, some good for food and others useless for any purpose. The fishermen "sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away. So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire:

there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth."

Passing to another instance of bringing angels into the scene, after Peter had thrust himself forward as a judge of proprieties in the utterances of his Lord, and the Lord thus rebuked had rebuked the rebuker by the declaration that Peter was engaged in a performance characteristic of the Satan who sows tares in the harvest field, Jesus proceeded to impress upon the disciples the truth that following him means the cross, and that precious care of the life to save it from the cross means loss of the life, and, furthermore, that losing it for his sake means finding it. Then he directed their thought to the consummation in these words, "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds." Mark quotes him as saying, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Luke gives his words in slightly different

phrase, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and *the glory* of the Father, and of the holy angels."

In that evening talk on Olivet, speaking of his coming for judgment, he affirms practically the same thing taught in the parables of the tares and of the net, save that he puts to the front angelic service in behalf of the children of the Kingdom in the process of harvesting instead of the dealing of angels with the children of the evil one. Matthew reports him in this way: "Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." In Mark's report his statement is phrased in this way: "Then shall he send forth the angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." As already noted, Mark quotes an added comment concerning a limitation in the knowledge of angels, either of this event or of some event connected

with the doom of Jerusalem, in which the Master appears to ascribe to himself a like limitation.

When he pictures the Judgment in pastoral terms as a separation between flocks he does not state what the office of the angels will be, but in the light of statements already quoted it is evident that they are to be employed in some task of gathering and separating, for he says: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another."

At another time he used words indicating that he had in mind some part, which he did not specify, to be taken by angels in the Day of Judgment. His thoughts were following the enmity of his foes along its course of hypocrisy, treachery, and murder to its certain doom. After warning his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees he bade them not to fear those who kill the body, and have no more that they can do, but to fear Him, who after he has killed has power to cast into Gehenna. The implication is that the hypocritical Pharisees do have reason to fear that One, whoever he may be, God or devil. But

the Master immediately proceeded to assure his followers that they may trust the God who does not forget one sparrow, although five are sold for two farthings, for in his sight they are of more value than many sparrows. Then his thought leaps forward from the fate of sparrows in the market to the fate of men at the Judgment bar, and to the presence of angels there, and he continues: "I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God." We can hardly think of angels in that scene standing around as idle spectators.

Maybe there were teachers in that elder day who were more interested to maintain what they regarded as truth about the universe and its God than to preserve the faith of their pupils. Be that as it may, we do not forget the scathing words which Jesus spoke concerning those who cause the little ones, who believe on him, to stumble. He concluded a dread warning with the solemn words: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." Whoever these angels may be,

and whatever their office, it comes out again here that his thought of judgment and doom brings angels to his mind.

Once at least Jesus referred to the nature of the angels with no allusion to their office. He gave a passing glimpse of the likeness between angels and human beings in the world to come when the Sadducees put up to him the question of the future marital relations of the woman who had seven husbands successively in this world. Angels were brought into the scene by way of comparison in the following words, as recorded in the first Gospel: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." Mark's report of his answer is in language nearly the same, but in Luke's record we read, "They that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."

Other references to angels may be noted briefly. In connection with the joy of finding a lost sheep, and a lost piece of silver, Jesus exclaims, "Even so, I say unto you, there is

joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Of course angels appear in the story of Lazarus and Dives. How could this Son of heaven follow a beggar out into the realm of departed spirits without seeing angels on the way? "It came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom." When a beggar dies, full of sores, the angels escort him to paradise; when the beloved Son of the Highest is being led by wicked men to a death of agony and shame, not one angel comes to rescue or to comfort him. To the friend who would defend him he says, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels."

Speaking of the easy belief, born of wonder that an absent Jesus could see a man under a fig tree in an hour of seclusion and read his thoughts, the Master said to Nathanael, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

As the final citation there are the dreadful words spoken of the opening of another place,

disclosing another kind of angels, when Jesus asserts that some persons shall be sent away under a curse into "the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

At the time of making some of these statements our Lord must have been looking into a realm real to him and real in itself though unseen by us. Some of his words suggest mysteries which we cannot fathom and raise questions which we cannot answer, but there are statements of fact which we should accept and lessons which we may profitably learn. Doubtless, in speaking of angels as he did, he uttered truth which he intended us to accept, and put it in such terms that we need not err therein. Is not he a reliable teacher on matters angelic?

In a present drift toward the ultimate absorption of personality into an all-embracing Divinity, itself perhaps submerged in impersonality, this question arises in some minds, Are these angels of Jesus real persons or impersonal influences? Does he mean that in the great day of his coming and "Presence" he will send forth persons to do the things mentioned, or that he will send forth mighty influences, emanating from himself, and themselves operating as divisive forces in human affairs? Even if he does not explicitly affirm

that they are persons, he certainly uses language which makes such an affirmation unnecessary. When he says of a certain day and hour that no one knows of it, "not even the angels," he associates them with other knowing persons in a way to indicate that it is a greater wonder for angels to be ignorant of that date than for saints on earth not to know it. Furthermore, it would take all the dignity and force out of his assertion that he will confess certain persons and deny others before the angels of God, reducing the statement to pompous drivel, to regard it as a solemn declaration that he will confess and deny human persons before the impersonal influences of God. Again, while it may not be clear just who are the angels mentioned in his warning not to despise the little ones who believe in him, he would be made to appear ridiculous if understood as declaring that the impersonal influences of little human beings do always behold the face of his Father. To cite only one other instance, when he says of certain persons that they will be equal to the angels, we can hardly think that he is saying of living and loving souls that they will attain to such a state as to be equal to cosmic or ethical forces of some sort. What comfort could be brought to a man with a

broken heart by assuring him that in the world beyond, his beloved will be equal to one of the mighty forces of the universe, such as gravitation in the realm of matter or in the realm of spirit?

Jesus has made it evident that in his view angels are citizens of the unseen country, somewhat as men are citizens of this world. Yet, while their citizenship is in heaven, they are interested, and eventually are to be enlisted, in one way or another, in the affairs of the kingdom of God on earth. He sees heaven already astir with emotion over the present conquests of the kingdom in human lives, and reads there the certainty that before the human drama shall be ended the heavenly hosts will be brought into action to bring the *dénouement* to pass.

It is significant that he called these heavenly beings "*his*" angels. In the harvest time they will act under his leadership and authority. Indeed, their very existence is in vital relationship to him. Other persons also were included by him in such a relationship. Yet not every soul. To some he said, "Ye are not of my sheep." There are persons never in the most remote way alluded to as being included in any sort of vital union with him. But he did repeatedly speak of *his* Father, *his*

disciples and *his* angels. There is added significance in the fact that he spoke of his angels as his Father's angels and as God's angels. This, of course, is not an express avowal of his oneness with the Father, but it is a strong indication of his consciousness of that oneness.

No wonder his angels are to be employed as helpers in the final harvesting. As he sent forth the twelve, charging them to preach, heal, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons; as he sent forth the seventy, two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself was about to come, bidding them speak the word and do the work of the kingdom of God, meantime praying the Lord of harvest to send forth laborers into his harvest; and as he sent the eleven, after his resurrection, to be his witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth in like manner he will send forth his angels to assist the Lord of the kingdom in the harvest day.

In this connection it should be noted that the scene of action for the angels in the period of sowing and growing, as Jesus speaks of them, is never in the earthly field. During all that time they are in the heaven above. It is only of the harvest time that he speaks of their presence and aid for a work which no

human helpers have authority or power to do. Yet how they are to accomplish the separation of human tares from human wheat, whether by revelation, evolution, the use of some kind of compulsion, or in some other way, does not appear.

Many a time some tumult of the heart has been quieted by Faber's tribute to the angels, ending with the refrain:

> "Angels of Jesus, angels of light,
> Singing to welcome the pilgrims of the night!"

When? Now, or by and by? Jesus never represents his angels as now singing, serving or praying for the pilgrims of the night, "O'er earth's green fields and ocean's wave-beat shore." In heaven they rejoice, perhaps with singing, over repentant sinners on earth, but on these shores the pilgrims must make their own music with no help from angel choirs. Is the burdened heart of the pilgrim cheered by the testimony of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who, after citing scripture to prove that the Son of God is more than equal unto the angels, ends the argument with the question, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" Doubtless, but when? Now or by and by? In the

sayings cited we have the testimony of the Son that it will be in the harvest time that he will send them forth for that service. In that great day of consummation the angels will welcome the pilgrims of the night to the blessedness of the place in the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

CHAPTER XVII

DIVERSE DESTINY

"As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth."

These words bring us to the climax of a series of contrasts having fateful realities on both sides. The entire parable of the tares is a picture of contrasts in the program and progress of the kingdom of heaven among the peoples of earth. Contrasted with the Son of man, Sower of good seed, is the enemy, sower of seed bad for the Kingdom and bad for the crop. Contrasted with the children of the Kingdom are children of alien character and allegiance. This contrast in human quality leads to a contrast in human destiny. The people of a certain quality go on to one kind of destiny, while the people of a different quality go on to another kind of destiny. The preceding contrasts lead up to the final con-

trast and make it inevitable. The parable is a grim story, and there is no mistaking its central teaching. Words could make nothing plainer than Jesus has made his teaching of diverse destiny for the children of men. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that it holds the central place in all his teaching of the tendencies, practices, and issues of human life. It is definitely declared in many of the sayings already reviewed, and implied in one way or another in most of them. The thought of that contrast haunted him. He could not flee from its presence. When he gazed upon the clouds of heaven, whether glorified by the rays of the rising sun or blackened by approaching storm, it was there. When he looked upon the Holy City, with the peaceful slopes of Olivet on one hand and the smoking valley of Gehenna on the other hand, the contrast in destiny was there. Wherever he went, upon the mountain or by the sea, through the crowded city street or along the roads of Samaria and Galilee, there was something to remind him of diverse destiny for man. He flashes its certainties upon the attention of the multitudes in the early days of his ministry and keeps it continuously before his hearers until he reiterates it in the thunder tones of warning for the ears of plotting hypocrites in

the last week of his incarnate life. Nor should it be overlooked that these references to contrasted fate abound in categorical statements as well as in parabolic and so-called apocalyptic utterances.

As we stir up the sincere mind by putting ourselves in remembrance of our Saviour's words, the following are some of the sayings which we recall. Many of them have been quoted in preceding pages, but in bringing them under review in close array repetition may result in some added disclosure and in deeper conviction of the ways of the Lord in his kingdom. When the multitudes came to him in an early period of his ministry, and he went up into a mountain and taught them, the gates with which they were familiar, and the paths over which they had passed in coming to that place on the mount, opened the way for him to say, "Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." The sight of orchards and gardens on the hillsides reminded him that in deeds and destiny men are like trees in their fruitage and fate. Some are like trees of quality so

good as to be kept in the gardens to furnish food and bring perpetual joy to the gardener's heart. Other men are like trees of such quality that their fruit is unpalatable and indigestible, their presence in the garden intolerable, and therefore they are hewn down and cast into the fire. Looking forward from that mountain height to the day of consummation, he reminded his hearers that on that day those who have done the will of the Father in heaven will have part in the kingdom of heaven, while others who have been punctilious in saying, "Lord, Lord," but have not done the will of the Father, will have no part in the kingdom, and he will profess unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." The teaching of the day ends in a word picture of contrasted destiny. Some are like builders on the rock, whose houses stand secure against tempest and flood. Others are like builders upon the sand whose houses go down into remediless ruin in the storm. He tells the men who have walked with him among the vineyards of Palestine that some persons are like living branches of a living Vine, pruned and trained to bring forth much fruit, while others are like fruitless and withered branches to be cut off, cast into the fire and burned. Meeting a Roman centurion, steadied by faith,

though living among wabbling Israelites, the Master says to the men of Israel, "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." The perils of his disciples who go forth as sheep in the midst of wolves move him to warn his hearers that every one who confesses him before men shall be confessed by him before his Father in heaven, but that whosoever shall deny him before men shall be denied by him before the Father. Then he thrusts upon them the contrast between those who find the life and those who lose it, in the paradoxical idea that the finders find *the* life in losing *a* life, and the losers lose *the* life in finding *a* life. The charge that he casts out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, leads him to declare that although some may be forgiven for speaking against the Son of man, those who speak against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven "neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." The ambition among his followers to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven brings from him a statement of contrast between the one who humbles himself as

a little child and enters the Kingdom, and another who causes one of the little believers to stumble and who is so far from entering the Kingdom as to meet a fate more dire than "that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and *that* he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." Again he states the contrast as taking away the kingdom of God from some and giving it to others. When news comes to him of the fall of a tower, killing eighteen persons, and he is told of Galilæans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, his outspoken thought is not of deliverance from the oppression of wicked rulers, nor of more careful supervision of unscrupulous contractors, and the need of better work in the construction of public buildings, but of those who repent and live and others who fail to repent and perish. When Jews seek to kill him because, in their opinion, he not only breaks the Sabbath but also calls God his own Father, making himself equal with God, he looks forward to the death that he knows he must die, and to the resurrection beyond, and immediately asserts that those who have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment. And when he speaks of judgment in the last day,

a custom of shepherds in separating flocks gives him a picture of the final separation and sentence, when the King shall say to one company, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," and shall also say to the other company, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

Likewise other parables. The only kind of harvest to be found in the parable of the tares is glorious life in the kingdom of their Father for some and fiery destruction for others. Were that contrast taken out, the whole idea of harvest would disappear. Purpose and meaning would be gone. Nothing would be brought to a conclusion. The only thing left would be a mixture of wheat and weeds, growing together with no finality stated or implied, unless it were the implication that the fruitfulness of life would be choked out of the grain as it was by thorns in one part of the field in the parable immediately preceding. In that parable of the Sower, diverse destiny is taught with a variety of destructive conditions on one side. On the one hand are those who hear the word, receive and understand it, and bear fruit from thirty to an hundredfold. On the other hand are those persons whose spiritual

life is ruined by the wiles of the evil one, shriveled by tribulation or persecution, or choked to death by the care of the world and the deceitfulness of riches. In the figure of the net that was cast into the sea and gathered fishes of all sorts, the net is drawn up on the beach, the good fishes are gathered into vessels, and the bad are cast away. Lest anyone should conclude that the bad are thrown back into the sea to recuperate, enjoy life, and possibly develop into finer fishes than the good ones which are eaten, he adds the plain statement quoted in the preceding chapter dealing with the reapers, "So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." In the parable of the great supper a certain finality in the earthly affairs of the kingdom of God is distinctly taught. The poor, and maimed, and blind, and lame are brought in from the streets and lanes of the city, and the highways and hedges of the country beyond, while others exclude themselves, and are excluded by the lord of the feast. He exclaims, "I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." The doom pictured in these words clearly appears when we consider that Jesus spoke the parable

in response to a guest sitting with him at a Pharisee's table, who said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." In the story of the marriage of the king's son the same finality is set forth in a more tragic way. Guests are brought in from the partings of the highways. Other persons, although repeatedly bidden, go their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, while the rest treat the king's servants shamefully and even murderously. The king sends his armies and destroys those murderers. Thus the fate of some is to be feasted, of others to be destroyed. It will not be forgotten that in a pair of familiar parables an outcome of diverse destiny is quite as specifically declared. In the story of the Pounds, when the servants of a nobleman are brought before him to render an account of their stewardship, two faithful servants are rewarded and one unfaithful servant is punished. In that day of judgment the nobleman declares, "Unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him." He also commands that certain citizens, not servants but enemies, be slain. In the story of the talents, two good and faithful servants are set over many things and enter into the joy of their lord. One wicked and slothful servant

has the talent taken from him and is cast into the outer darkness. Two more parables may be mentioned as picturing this contrast in human destiny, so persistently taught by our Lord. One opens the door upon a feast in heaven and the other upon a scene in Hades. In the first the kingdom of heaven is likened unto ten virgins who go forth to meet a bridegroom. Five go in with him to the marriage, but against the other five the door is shut. When they stand outside in the night and cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," he answers, "Verily, verily I say unto you, I know you not." In the other scene a beggar and a high liver pass through the gates of death into realms separated by an impassable gulf, where the beggar is comforted and the other is in anguish.

Attention has not been called to these teachings in all the foregoing detail because of any new disclosure in the things stated, or in the manner of statement, or in the interpretation, but because the teachings are so generally ignored at the present time. The Father has introduced his Son to the world in the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Such a Christ as that Son could not speak to such a world as this without being a prophet of woe as well as of weal; but when he warns, ears are dull

and eyes are closed. Nothing could be spoken more plainly than these predictions of diverse destiny. Three chapters of blessing brighten the pages of the Gospel as recorded by Matthew near the beginning, while three chapters of warning cast their shadows over human hearts near the end. Moreover, there are quite as many warnings interwoven with the blessings as there are blessings intermingled with the warnings. Yet in many a church the hearers are repeatedly lulled by the music of the beatitudes, but seldom if ever disturbed by so much as a rumbling of the thunder of the woes. It is so easy to remember that the God and Father of Jesus is like the father of the prodigal, and so difficult to bear in mind that this heavenly Father is also like a certain king who delivered an unmerciful servant to the tormentors till he should pay his debts, and that the Father will so deal with every one who does not from the heart forgive the brother who sins against him.

Looking backward, we behold a procession of tragedies in human experience from the days of the first man, Edenic or arboreal, to the present hour. Looking forward, Jesus beheld the continuance of like tragedy unto a final tragedy in the consummation of the age. In picturing that tragedy he set forth the

fate of the "tare" people in various terms. He spoke of them as banished from his presence, cast out, cast into Gehenna, cast into eternal fire, plunged into outer darkness, ground to powder, perishing, destroyed. We need not project into this imagery things which he did not put there. Speaking of burning tares is not saying that, like Horeb's bush, they burn forever and are not consumed. Speaking of casting men into Gehenna, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," is not saying that the men die not, but live and burn forever. Furthermore, we do no violence to the teaching if we regard these utterances, not as predicting the arbitrary pronouncement of a sentence and infliction of a penalty, but as stating the inevitable operation of law as changeless as the character of God.

One thing is common to all these statements. Every one sets forth the fact of total separation from the kingdom of God and from the Lord of the kingdom. To be in the Kingdom and a part of it means *Life.* What must it mean to be outside the Kingdom and totally separated from it? Can that mean anything less than *Death?*

Yet for all who meet this fate the compassionate Christ does the best that he can do.

Notwithstanding all the sacrifice of his own life in their behalf and all appeals from his heart, they choose to follow the course which makes their fate inevitable. We do not forget that to the Jerusalem upon which he pronounced his most appalling woes he cried in anguish, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

CHAPTER XVIII

HARVEST HOME

"THEN shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

Do we ask as did disciples nineteen hundred years ago, "When shall these things be?" Like Pharisees of that evil and adulterous generation long ago, do we seek after signs? Far be it from us to do what our Master never did, namely, fix the precise time for this shining forth.

So much as this is evident in his teaching, that the harvesting of the righteous is to be a new beginning of some kind, proceeding from the consummation of which we read as "the end of the world." It will be either in the resurrection or beyond it; and resurrection itself is an experience after death. The harvest must be something beyond the grave for the righteous who have already reached the grave, whatever it may be for those who are yet unborn. Of course the question of what the harvest is to be more deeply concerns us than any question of when, where, or how. In these last words of the parable of the tares the final outcome for the righteous is set before us in a blaze of glory. No statement

of preliminaries is here made. Whatever of death, resurrection, or judgment may precede, at last they shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. As Jesus mentions the outcome on other occasions, they inherit the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; they enter into the joy of their Lord. Precisely what it means to inherit the Kingdom, enter into the joy of the Lord, and shine forth as the sun, he does not explain. But from his sayings at various times we may glimpse his vision of life in the homeland.

Jesus was neither tardy nor parsimonious in promising rewards for his followers. Beginning by pledging the earth to the meek, and the treasure of heaven to the poor in spirit, in the foremost sentences of the Sermon on the Mount, he went on through his ministry promising great recompense in the future. He pronounced the prospect of reward for his disciples as so alluring as to warrant them in rejoicing with exceeding gladness, and even in leaping for joy. He went so far as to declare that their reward would begin with an hundredfold in the present time and go on to infinite proportions in the world to come. These rewards are to be bestowed for service so humble, and are to be so ample, that giving

a cup of cold water only to one of the Lord's little ones in the name of a disciple will entitle the giver to a place on the honor roll of the Kingdom; and receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet will insure a prophet's reward.

The question arises if this is not what some altruistic saints of the present time criticize in the religion of saints of former times as "other-worldliness." We must admit that as between other-worldliness and worldliness our Lord prefers the former. He calls upon us to lay up our treasure in heaven, and thus by making investments in heavenly securities to get the heart centered in that region. He warns against caring too much for loaves and fishes and living too much in the realm of economic goods. Indeed, we are urged to dismiss all anxiety for the goods of this world in seeking a kingdom not of this world. We are told to rejoice more over having our names written in heaven than in the power to keep the devils of this world under subjection He does not hesitate to declare that his own are not of this world; even as he is not of this world. We may as well concede that all this is other-worldliness of a certain blessed kind, and bid the worldly of every kind make the most of it. Here is a current ever flowing in his teaching.

Recognizing the fact, if we would be fair to him we should seek to sound this current to its utmost depths. In the sayings thus far cited the whole story of his other-worldliness has not been told. A revelation of its quality may be seen in his answer to the young man who asked how he could make sure of eternal life in the other world: "Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me." So the path of the young ruler to that other world must be through sacrificial ministry of the most thorough sort in this world. In the same strain is the rebuke which he represents his Father as administering to the covetous fool who laid up treasure for himself and was not rich toward God. Thus in his word, as in his deed, there was no repudiation of obligation to the present world and no neglect of its crying need. There was a constant call to super-worldliness. He demanded of his followers that they should serve and sacrifice in this world as belonging to the higher world of spirit and of God. His super-worldliness was at the opposite pole from the sub-worldliness of those who oppress the poor or neglect the interests of their fellows to lay up treasure for themselves, that their own souls may take their ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Jesus would have his disciples be like students in a preparatory school. There is a game to play, a service to render, a life to live, where they are, but the greater world, with its wider opportunity and larger life, is beyond. This appears in his disclosures of the conditions and nature of the rewards. They are not to be secured by seeking as the nations of the world seek. Heavenly prizes are not awarded according to earthly classifications. "Many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first." The rewards themselves are in the nature of greater tasks and opportunities. Faithfulness in a few things in this world leads to the care of many things in the world to come. Indeed, in the Master's symbolism, faithfulness in a very little here is rewarded by authority over several cities there, with all the responsibilities and opportunities therein involved. Hence if there is such a place as a super-world, why should not toilers and sufferers here lay up treasure there, and have the highest aspirations and deepest longings centered in that realm? It can be done without any slacking of service in this field. Although a super-worldling of the eighteenth century wrote that he had

> "A never-dying soul to save,
> And fit it for the sky,"

his next words were,

"To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill,
Oh may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will!"

Why not fit one's soul for the sky in such service? Could a twentieth-century apostle of social service do much better?

It has been noted in a previous chapter that Jesus made vivid mention of "the last day," and that as he envisaged that day one of its events is to be resurrection. For his followers resurrection can be nothing less than triumphant entrance into the life of the world to come. The resurrection of the just means blessed recompense for things done and suffered in this world. Unspeakable good awaits those who shall be accounted worthy. It appears to have given him peculiar satisfaction to individualize his own in speaking of their resurrection; as when he declares of every one drawn to him and given to him by the Father, and therefore believing on him, "I will raise him up at the last day." Moreover, his assurance of resurrection takes on added significance in view of the fact that in his teaching death is presented as a tragedy, with never a word uttered in its praise. It was at the tomb of a friend that he wept, and groaned "in

himself." When thinking of himself as dying like the grain of wheat that falls into the ground he exclaimed, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Again, knowing that he was doomed to death on the cross the following day, he confessed to his friends, Peter, James and John, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." That agonizing prayer in Gethsemane would indicate that death was the bitterest cup that he ever drank. By way of antithesis his testimony to life in all its variety, pregnancy, and power reveals his attitude toward death. In his teaching, direct and indirect, death presents no loveliness. In itself it is never an asset, always a liability; never a blessing, ever a disaster; never delightful, everywhere dismal. Hence, of all the "I ams" that passed his lips, there is no greater than this, "I am the resurrection and the life."

From sayings already mentioned and other sayings hopeful "pilgrims of the night" and of the morning may gather some of the things which were in the mind of the Master concerning his own in the harvest home. Perhaps first of all is his thought of the children of the Kingdom as the Living Ones. In the world

to come they are to have life as eternal as that world and its King; life new yet not strange; the newness of addition without subtraction of anything really good; a continuance of the life which he began to bring forth in them while they were yet in the earthly harvest field. The life born of the Spirit of God in this world, nourished by bread from heaven here, and promoted here by the One who has all power there, is to go on forever. That will be, not simply endless existence, but existence filled to overflowing with divine content. As we have heard from him it will be life of his kind and of his Father's kind. As the Father is in him, and he in the Father, so the life of his own is to be inextricably intertwined with the life of God.

These immortals of whom Jesus speaks as "children of the resurrection" are to be gainers forever. He is reported as assuring his chosen apostles, who are to be despised and persecuted on the earthly shores, that he appoints unto them a kingdom, and that they are to sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel. No doubt this is the highest peak of symbolism, yet he must mean that some kind of enthronement is to be characteristic of the heavenly life. But what kind? He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, but with what kind

of exaltation? Surely, no kind that will transform meekness into haughtiness. Surely, not the exaltation of overlordship and pompous display. The righteous shall indeed shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, but no individual, nor any group, shall outshine all others. The Lord who condemned pride and ambition for position here will not enthrone such qualities there. The promised enthronement must be some consummation of pure desire, noble thought, godlike purpose, sacrificial love. In it humility will not perish, but will triumph over selfishness and pride.

Nevertheless, down in the depths of the soul may linger the fear that death must result in loss, even for the good. When friends die who are so dear to us that their death wrenches out a large part of our life, we may grieve over the loss which it seems they must have suffered. The babe has lost the opportunity for service and achievement in the world field. The mature pilgrim has lost companionship with friends and enjoyment in objects held dear. We cannot help feeling sorry for them. We do not say this. It is not the proper thing to say or even to think, but the thought will cast its shadow over us to plague the heart. Unquestionably,

death may result in irreparable loss. It did in the case of the rich fool whose soul was wedded to his barns. Admitting that to be true, resurrection may be gain forever to the children of the Kingdom. What doth it impoverish a man to lose the whole world, and yet save his own life as a child of the resurrection? A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. There is no *real* estate in the worldly realm of matter. All the riches of this world are unreal. In the resurrection all possible loss and sorrow of death to the children of the Kingdom shall give place to the wealth and joy and victory of life. Moreover, there is genuine restoration in the resurrection as Jesus spoke of it. He said, "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Not merely some transcendent substitute for it, but the life itself; no doubt divested of its earthly tarnish and imperfection. Resurrection is standing up again among the imperishable realities of life divine. Those who thus stand up again shall possess those realities in increasing measure forever. Resurrection is not a coming back to them, but a going forward to them, as to treasure laid up in heaven. Thus to those who have been made disciples to the kingdom of heaven resurrection will bring forth treasure

both new and old. The Father, who numbers all the hairs of the head in this world, will not fail to supply the ever-increasing needs of the heart in the world to come.

It follows from all this that the children of the Kingdom are to be youths forever. More pathetic than untimely death is the gradual submergence of youth in decrepitude, vacuity, and decay. That spectacle is ever painful to the loving heart. When a friend is gone, with whom one has journeyed from childhood to age, memory overleaps the period of decrease to dwell fondly amid the scenes of youthful strength and hope. In lonely days and wakeful nights we stroll again with our beloved along the paths we trod together when life was young. We see them no more tottering toward the grave, but ever pressing up the heights. Yet the ground for our hope is not in the backward look of a desolate heart, but in the forward look of the ever-living Christ. What did he behold when he looked up into heaven from his haunts in Galilee? When he looked upon those who are accounted worthy to attain to that other world and the resurrection from the dead he said, "Neither can they die any more." In this world they were always dying. Here they began to die when they began to live. From childhood the in-

sidious germs of disease were doing their fatal work in secret. There they become "Die-no-mores." Nothing less than that can they be. Somebody's victory over death has brought to them the vigor of endless youth. Old age is not to be found in the eternal habitations. Eternal life cannot be old age. The æons of eternity may make a life unthinkably long, but it is not in them to make a life old. Life in God's eternity must forever be the life of youth. What did Jesus mean when, in speaking to those men from the country of Socrates about keeping the soul unto life eternal, he taught them that it must be treated like the grain of wheat which falls into the ground and dies yet lives in an abundant fruitage, if he did not mean that the resurrection of God's children is endless rejuvenation? He must have meant that this young man of Galilee was preparing a realm in which no inhabitant will ever say, "I am sick," and no inhabitant will say, "I am old," because in the vital processes of undying life all will be youths forever.

Still better, the children of the Kingdom are to be comrades and lovers forever. Jesus sets the life of the coming kingdom before us in scenes which picture the life of family and home. This One who declares that his dis-

ciples doing the will of God are "My brother and sister and mother," and who says that where he is to be they shall be also, must be thinking of life yonder as somewhat like the life of the home in Nazareth. He speaks of the faithful as reclining at a table to eat and drink with one another and with him in the kingdom of heaven. Symbolism, one says? Yes, but the symbol of nothing poorer than a real home life. So vividly does he picture it as being a home that one reclining at the dinner table with him in a home of Judæa exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Jesus responded to that exclamation by telling host and guests how the heavenly gathering is to be like a great supper. Well, then, does Jesus see a great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, gathered at a single big table? It does not so appear. He was fond of meeting with the small group in the earthly home. To get his little band away from the crowd he said to them, "Come ye apart." Frequently he led certain ones of the twelve away from the others for intimate communion. Instead of bewildering his disciples by telling them that in the Father's house is one big table, he comforted them with the assurance that there

are many "abiding-places" in that house. The word used by him to denote the "*abiding-places*" is the same word which Luke used when he wrote that there was no "*room*" for Joseph and Mary in the inn at Bethlehem. All the lodges around the open courtyard were taken. Our Lord has gone to see to it that separate lodges, or abiding-places, are reserved for couples and little groups in the heavenly home. He will not have the comradeships of the present time dissolved in the mass.

It is significant that this One who came not to destroy the law but to fulfill, on the last evening before he went away, added something to the word of God spoken from Sinai. These were his words, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye love one another." Thus the Fulfiller of the old commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," commands and thereby pledges himself to inspire a diviner love. Here is a love of kindred spirits surpassing the love of the good Samaritan on the Jerusalem and Jericho road; a love which will have its blessed consummation in the future life. There is an obedience to the new commandment which brings a Christ-born love. He makes possible the complete

fulfillment of his commandment. Then lovers love even as he loves. Will he ever destroy that love? Such a thing is unthinkable. And will not the "all-power" abiding in him make it possible for him to carry that blessed union and communion of love onward forever?

As touching the life of Christlike lovers in the world to come there is a revealing utterance in his reply to that question asked by Pharisees in regard to the marital relation. Jesus said, "They are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Who can fathom the depths of meaning in those words, "What therefore God hath joined together"? Could the heavenly Father be engaged in lovelier work than uniting human souls in Christlike love? Doubtless not all who are closely associated in some way are joined together by the Lord—some by desires born of the flesh rather than the spirit, and others, for cooperation or comradeship, by bonds as varied as human quests, passions, and impulses. But if lovers are united in love Christ-born, if they love as he loves, the two are not only one flesh but they are also one spirit. Those lovers God hath joined together. Some are husband and wife. Others may be mother and son, or father and daughter, or other partners in the

friendships of the kingdom of God. And surely those whom God hath joined together in this world *he* will not put asunder in any world. It is true that a David or a Jonathan may break the friendship in which soul is knit with soul. It may be possible for those whom God has joined together to sever the tie in which he has united them, but God will never do it. Will he suffer time or space or death or life or angels or principalities or things present or things to come or powers or height or depth or any other creation to estrange and separate lovers united in love divine? Not if he can prevent it. Here is love that will not fail. The endless ages are its own. These shall be comrades and lovers forever in the heavenly home.

When the Master was at the end of his earthly road, having finished his teaching, some doubted. So it is in these days. Some long to believe, and yet, in spite of all their longings and all his words and deeds, they doubt. Unto such he says, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or *whether* I speak from myself."

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Jesus Christ of Life
Author + finisher the Captain but in his
Teaching not first of these = He lives with
Life, = Identified all from God + man.

Jesus The Source of Life.
In him was life + light of men
Apart from him not anything

Jesus the Sanction of Life
Creed of Life
Shall live + die
Men + Women,

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